United Nations A/65/PV.5

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

5th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 21 September 2010, 9 a.m.
New York

Co-Chair: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session)
Co-Chair: Mr. Joseph Deiss ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

Agenda items 13 and 115 ***(continued)***

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/65/L.1)

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind members about the length of statements. Members will recall that, in accordance with Assembly resolution 64/184 of 21 December 2009, the list of speakers has been drawn up based on a time limit of five minutes per statement. I therefore request speakers to observe that limit out of respect for all who will speak after them so that everyone can enjoy the same conditions. I thank everyone for their understanding and discipline.

The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

President Christofias: It is a great pleasure to participate in this High-level Meeting, which has a most noble aim. Ambitious and far-reaching as they may be, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) certainly deserve our fullest attention and dedication. Nations small and big should assume their shared responsibilities and ensure that all the MDGs are met on time.

In fact, over the first 10 years we have spoken a lot but not done enough. In the five years that remain, we must intensify our efforts to make up lost ground. For our part, although Cyprus is a small country with limited resources, we are doing everything possible to implement the commitments we have undertaken, mobilizing additional and innovative sources of financing. CyprusAid, the development cooperation service of the Republic, aims for an efficient and well-targeted allocation of assistance to maximize the benefits to partner countries.

One of the objectives is to strive towards universal access to social services and social protection, and to reduce inequalities. In this regard, we are working with our European Union (EU) and United Nations partners, as well as with numerous local and international non-governmental organizations. We channel our development assistance more specifically to health care areas, such as the construction of clinics and donation of ambulances. We also direct it to education, tourism-related services and infrastructure, such as bridge construction and public works. In the future, we will have to devote more attention to environmental problems created by climate change.

Lacking a project implementation mechanism for the time being, Cyprus pursues development projects

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via delegated cooperation — that is, in close collaboration with our EU partners and development agencies. The projects implemented or planned thus far are aimed exclusively at the Millennium Development Goals.

The European Union and its member States play a crucial role in enabling developing countries to achieve MDGs 4 and 5, concerning child mortality and maternal health, respectively. In this context, I would like to note our contribution to MDG 6 — on AIDS — through our support of the International Drug Purchase Facility, which is an innovative mechanism for financing development.

I assure Members from this rostrum that I will do everything I can to ensure that Cyprus continues to be an active regional and global player in this collective effort of ours. Before concluding, let me reiterate what I said yesterday. If we want to effectively and substantially touch on the problems of poverty and gender inequality, we must fight to achieve a more just distribution of global wealth.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland.

President Halonen: The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) is based on the idea that peace and security, development and respect of human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This trinity is still true.

A democratic State that respects human rights and the rule of law and applies good governance and social justice provides a solid foundation for the aspirations of its citizens. The activities of non-governmental organizations have been and are crucial to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and we also need the work of business life.

There is strong evidence that our common efforts have brought about results. The Goals have become an integral part of developing countries' own national development strategies. Many examples demonstrate that the Goals played had an important role in national poverty reduction.

Finland is fully committed to the Millennium Development Goals. We will continue to increase funding for development cooperation, which will reach 0.58 per cent of our gross national income next year, thereby keeping us on track to reach the 0.7 per cent level by 2015. Our support is increasingly directed to Africa. We encourage other countries to do the same.

The Millennium Development Goals are a part of a broad development agenda. It includes the mutually reinforcing objectives of ensuring respect for and the promotion and protection of all human rights and of strengthening democracy and the rule of law.

The empowerment of women is crucial to achieving the Millennium Goals, but we need the commitment and contribution of women and men alike. Recent declines in maternal mortality show that we can make a difference. A rights-based approach is particularly important in promoting maternal health and the reproductive rights of women. This scarf on my shoulders tells of the strong movement of women and men who support that approach. Finland welcomes and strongly supports the newly established UN Women, which will promote gender equality worldwide and across the United Nations system.

Efforts to eradicate poverty and improve the lives of all people need to be based on economic, social and ecological sustainability. Special attention must be given to indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, which are often subject to discrimination. The rights of persons with disabilities must be made visible and addressed in activities related to the Millennium Development Goals at all levels.

In 2004, we decided that globalization should also be reformed, because only fair globalization could be a positive force for all the peoples of the world. We must create conditions for sustainable economic growth leading to decent jobs. This is essential for reducing poverty.

There is a strong link between climate issues and the Millennium Development Goals. Progress in work related to climate change benefits our efforts to achieve the MDGs. We also need to protect biodiversity and ecosystems, which contribute to efficient, long-term adaptation to climate change. Finland is looking forward to a fruitful high-level event on biodiversity, to be held tomorrow.

The Secretary-General has set up a High-level Panel on Global Sustainability to formulate a new vision for sustainable growth and prosperity. I am honoured to co-chair the Panel, together with President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. After the first meeting of

the Panel on Sunday, I could tell, even in the very short time we had, that the Panel is determined to put forward new ideas in order to meet the challenge.

We in Finland strongly believe that the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved. A strong multilateral system is a vital key to this end. The Goals can be achieved only through cooperation and equal participation. Developed and developing countries alike must be able to participate in and be committed to global decision-making.

Finally, 10 years ago, I had the honour to chair the United Nations Millennium Summit with former President Sam Nujoma of Namibia. I remember well the enthusiastic spirit at that meeting. Let us keep that spirit in our hearts and turn the Millennium Development Goals into the life of the people.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary.

President Schmitt: As we all know, lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. Every single individual on Earth has both the potential and the right to live a decent life. This is a collective challenge. Therefore, collective thinking and multifaceted actions are needed in order to meet the diverse, yet closely interconnected set of goals lying ahead of us.

Hungary strongly advocates a holistic approach to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Consciously targeted policies are required to reach the Goals on which we are lagging behind, and full policy coherence is needed in order to accelerate the process.

While emphasizing that all MDGs are equally important and interrelated, Hungary believes that eradicating extreme poverty and hunger would significantly contribute to the fulfilment of the other Goals. A comprehensive approach to food security is essential, and we are of the view that sustainable agricultural development based on local resources, opportunities and ecological aspects is a vital element of this.

As recent MDG progress reviews have revealed, rural communities in particular suffer from a lack of development. We feel that an emphasis on rural development and improvement of rural living conditions can contribute to the reduction of urban migration and therefore help reduce the build-up of slums.

The security of water supplies, proper water management, access to clean water and sanitation are core elements of the overarching priorities of the Millennium Development Goals. Hungary is committed to further sharing its experiences in this field with its partners. Let me point out in this regard that water will also be one of the main themes of the forthcoming Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of the coming year.

Hungary is convinced that there can be no sustainable development without improving capacity in human resources. Education empowers individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to shape the future, protect our limited resources and participate in building more peaceful societies. Education, especially for women and girls living in poverty, not only provides opportunities for a better future, but is also a key for survival. Economic growth and political democracy are also held back unless women participate on an equal footing with men. Access to inclusive, functional and quality education, corresponding to the needs of our rapidly changing world, is also essential.

But the importance of physical education should not be neglected either. My insistence and determination on this subject will certainly be understood when considerate is recalled that I am probably the only Head of State in this Hall who is actually an Olympic champion. Sport is not only beneficial to health, but it also teaches discipline, determination, fellowship and respect for each other.

Similarly, special attention needs to be attributed to multilingual education, including learning in one's mother tongue, both at the level of communities and among individuals. Coherent and sustainable policies are needed in order to implement these priorities, as this is an area where results become tangible only in the long run.

Meeting global health challenges is also a priority, since the development of human resources relies largely on the improvement of the health sector, extensive access to health care and increasing of the local capacities of national health systems. Hungary can contribute to this process by offering its experience in building national health care networks, implementing infant vaccination systems and sharing

its professional knowledge and new technological developments in the field of medical devices.

With regard to one particular area — maternal health — I would like to draw attention to the unique Hungarian system of health visitors network covering the entire country, under which specialized nurses regularly visit pregnant women and mothers with newborn babies, even in the smallest communities. We are ready to share our experiences in this field with our development partners, and in this way contribute to progress in maternal and infant health-related MDGs.

Benefiting from the results and opportunities of scientific progress and new technologies is a crucial component of achieving our development goals. Many developing countries have obtained remarkable results in this field. Since 2003, Hungary has organized the biennial World Science Forum, a unique global initiative in that domain, which gives a strategic perspective to the linkages between science and development, with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable countries.

Development is a partnership. It is our future which is at stake now. Therefore, it is our common responsibility to make every effort to accomplish our commitments. We strive not only for an efficient, economically well-functioning international system, but also for a harmonious, dignified and human world. Let us work together for a sustainable future.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

President Ahmadinejad (*spoke in Farsi; English text provided by the delegation*): I praise Almighty God for granting me the opportunity to attend this gathering.

Throughout the ages, humankind has aspired to lead a prosperous life full of beauty, serenity, amity and moral and spiritual perfection. We have had thousands of years of somewhat bitter and sweet experience, along with abundant opportunities to build a better future, in conformity with the true dignity of humankind and as the most gracious creation of God deserves.

The most serious problems of the past millennia were derived from inhumane and infected credos, accompanied by unfair and cruel management. In fact, the undemocratic and unjust governance structures of the international economic and political decision-making bodies are the reasons for most of the plights that humankind is confronting today. Greedy liberal capitalism and transnational corporations have caused the suffering of countless women, men and children in many countries.

The first decade of the current millennium, although designated by the General Assembly as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, was unfortunately marred by war, occupation, carnage, adventurism and intimidation. Fundamental reform of this undemocratic and unjust system is essential if we wish to create a fair and open one.

The world needs a comprehensive and, of course, just and humane order in which the rights of all are preserved and peace and security safeguarded. The formation and functioning of this new order would require two decisive factors: a theoretical basis and essential structures and managerial methods.

It is my firm belief that, in the new millennium, we need to revert to the divine mindset, to the true nature for which man was created and, indeed, to just and fair governance. A divine mindset based on the perfectionist and justice-seeking nature of humankind and on a monotheistic worldview is in fact the very heavenly mindset that makes man's blissful talents blossom. Such a mindset should be humankind's guiding principle to ensure a prosperous social life, liberating its economic, cultural and political outlook from egoism, hegemonic tendencies and envy. Meanwhile, just and fair governance based on a divine mindset is a critical guarantor for the realization of justice, love and security in society.

Peoples and nations seek their eminence, dreams and aspirations in developing amicable relations and fair cooperation, and find their identity through coexistence with others. Those who have not felt justice within their souls and are unable to control their rage and selfish desires; those who do not feel compassionate towards others; those who are not moved when people's rights are breached and widespread carnage is unleashed; and those who are mindful only of their own interests and their selfish, sectarian and materialistic pleasures cannot uphold justice or bring about prosperity.

The third millennium ought to be a time for pursuing a new order based on pure and righteous governance throughout the world and in the centres of power.

Now that the discriminatory order of capitalism and hegemonic approaches are facing defeat and nearing their end, all-out participation in upholding justice and prosperous interrelations is essential. All should participate in a coordinated effort to establish competent governance in the centres of world power and to secure serenity, welfare, friendship and sustainable peace and security.

Since this great ideal is attainable only through the participation of all nations and States, I wish to propose that the second decade of this century be designated by the United Nations as a decade for joint global governance, and request all heads of State, thinkers and global reformers, through consultation and empathy, to spare no effort in practical planning for the realization of this noble goal.

Undoubtedly, this is the prelude to the bright destiny of humankind promised by God, all the prophets, the righteous and the saints, which will occur with the resurrection of the promised one, along with the Jesus. Let us join hands and make the third millennium an era in which all good deeds and beauties prevail and justice is upheld. Let us please God by founding compassionate coexistence throughout the world.

Peace be upon the promised one who will bring justice. Peace be upon all good-hearted people and justice-seekers. Peace be upon those who have love for humankind in their hearts and the dream of humankind's progress and eminence in their minds. Peace be upon the millennium of freedom, righteousness and beauty.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu.

Mr. Natapei (Vanuatu): The leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum remain concerned about the pace of our progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite steady progress towards achieving the MDGs and improved levels of human development, many of our countries that are small island developing States (SIDS) are struggling to achieve the Goals. The Pacific's progress towards achievement of the MDGs and consequently improved levels of human development has been uneven. While gains have been made, there remain threats to such progress due to the inherent vulnerability of SIDS, as articulated in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for its Further Implementation.

The increasing vulnerability of Pacific Island countries to threats and challenges has been highlighted by the impact of the global economic, financial, fuel and food crises, and compounded by the current and impending impact of climate change, as well as our inherently limited capacity to cope.

At the same time, the challenges of poverty and hardship, food security, affordable and sustainable energy, isolation, limited economies of scale, the global recession and climate change are all interrelated and cannot be effectively tackled on their own, or by us alone.

In underscoring the Pacific leaders' commitment to accelerating progress towards achieving the MDGs by 2015, the Port Vila Declaration on Accelerating Progress on the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was adopted by Pacific Forum leaders at their recent meeting in Vanuatu. The Port Vila Declaration recognizes that the MDGs are extremely important, as is the incremental path taken towards those Goals. This path should recognize and accommodate the special circumstances and challenges we face in the Pacific.

However, without concerted action and commitment, the Port Vila Declaration will not likely succeed. In this context, the Pacific region calls for greater investment by Governments and their development partners alike in sustainable and inclusive development approaches; the scaling-up of investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women and the most vulnerable in our communities, including investment in technology and infrastructure in all aspects of development and development processes; more systematic approaches to involving the non-governmental sector in the planning and implementation of national and regional development priorities based on their comparative expertise; investment in data and information management systems; improved understanding and ability to address our vulnerabilities; and improved coordination of efforts towards achieving the MDGs.

Despite a number of challenges facing the Pacific region, there exist strong signs of potential and success in the progress made to achieve the MDGs. These windows of opportunity highlight the importance of localizing the MDGs in national and regional plans and programmes, and building up the collaboration between the whole of Government and the non-governmental sector in the areas of greatest need for the Pacific island peoples. The coordinated support of our development partners in this respect is also a critical ingredient.

I draw attention to the progress made by the Pacific region on MDG 2, on achieving universal primary education. The primary education systems of the Pacific region are characterized by high enrolment, with six countries currently displaying net enrolment ratios of over 90 per cent. At present, five Pacific island countries are on track to achieve the MDG 2 target, with a further six countries having made significant progress. Equally, all Pacific island countries are expected to meet the goal of gender equality in education by 2015.

Many Pacific countries have also localized the global indicators by amending them to suit local circumstances and priorities. In some cases, additional development goals in the context of the MDGs have been included and indicators changed to make them more relevant.

With this level of progress, we are under no illusion about the enormous scale of the task ahead of us as sovereign nations and as a region with its own unique challenges and circumstances. Much work needs to be done to accelerate sustainable progress, in particular to make economic growth more inclusive and sustainable, strengthen social protections and reduce persistent gender gaps, ensure financial inclusion, extend regional cooperation and – of particular importance to the Pacific region – boost technical cooperation and development assistance. That said, both the acceleration and the sustainability of progress must be pursued together through approaches that factor in exchange rate differences, progress among Pacific countries and their various levels of vulnerability.

To this end, the Pacific region remains resolute in its commitments under the Millennium Declaration and calls on its neighbours in this global village, Governments and development partners alike, to share in our efforts as we strive to achieve livelihoods for our peoples and our communities and, most of all, for our future.

At the national level, my country, Vanuatu, has some positive MDG results to report. For the past 10 years our Government, with development partner support, has made major achievements in developing and implementing its national strategy for development, which is focused on economic growth for all, through prudent macroeconomic policies and fiscal controls, providing basic services, transport and communications to every community in Vanuatu, and in the area of legislative reform.

All policies and strategies within each sector are linked in order to achieve the national vision of an educated, safe, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu. This has resulted in many communities — including some of the most remote — recording impressive successes. The implementation of fee-free primary education has seen enrolment increase by 20 per cent from 2005 to 2010, with primary school gross enrolment at approximately 95 per cent in 2010.

In health, there have been a number of significant achievements related to staffing levels, suitably trained personnel, equipment and facilities, and disease treatment. For example, the incidence of malaria decreased from 198 per 1,000 people in 1990 to 13 per 1,000 people in 2009. The rate now is almost 15 times less than it was in 1990 - a major achievement. Health professionals are now resourced to work in communities to identify and treat the major diseases malaria and tuberculosis. Ironically, these increased efforts have resulted in some increases in the MDG indicators for these diseases. The incidence and death rates are in fact unchanged, but what has changed is our ability to diagnose and treat these major threats to health.

My Government acknowledges the contributions of those who have partnered with us in our development efforts, resulting in gains that they are able to report on. The contribution and participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in our collective and ongoing efforts towards sustainable development in Vanuatu must also be acknowledged. They have made their influence felt. From debt relief and disease to good governance and human rights, the global NGO revolution — a revolution experienced in Vanuatu and the Pacific — has helped move the global

agenda and given new life and new meaning to the idea of an international community.

It is my belief that, with strong political leadership at all levels, backed by evidence-based and well-targeted interventions and adequate resources and coupled with strengthened partnerships, the MDGs can be met.

I am pleased to report further that Vanuatu's second MDG progress report has just been completed. It is based on currently available data and reflects the views of many stakeholders from different backgrounds and areas of interest and expertise. The report highlights a number of interventions that could help to accelerate progress towards reaching our goals by 2015. We are grateful for the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme to MDG monitoring in Vanuatu through assistance provided in mainstreaming MDGs into sectoral development plans and policies and in the drafting of the report.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia.

President Johnson-Sirleaf. We are here because we share a fundamental belief that poverty, illiteracy, disease and inequality do not belong in the twenty-first century. We share a common purpose: to eradicate these ills for the benefit of all. And we share a common tool to achieve this: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs are universal, but their impact will be greatest in the world's poorest nations, mainly those in sub-Saharan Africa, like my own country, Liberia. But it is also in Africa that we have seen the difference the MDGs have been making. They have mobilized the international community, donor countries and Governments around a common set of targets.

We have made progress. Eleven low-income African countries are among the 20 top performers. However, it is clear that the continent still has far to go; yet I know that if we intensify our focus and efforts, we will ultimately achieve them.

My message is this: As we renew our resolve in 2010, we must recognize the need for inclusive economic growth. We need rapid, stable and sustained growth that creates jobs, especially for young people and in sectors that benefit the poor and increase opportunities for women.

The Goals are global, but their impact is local. Each country has a distinct context and a unique vision of development. We must therefore take stock, listen to our people and choose the path that will bring to life the vision of the MDGs.

In Liberia, we are implementing the Goals in a more challenging context. As we embark upon the process of rebuilding and renewal, we have focused on national reconciliation, rebuilding our governance systems and institutions, and reforming our security and rule of law sectors. In spite of our unique challenges, we have remained committed to the MDGs. Our progress so far bears the fruits of that commitment.

Liberia has made appreciable progress, especially on MDG 3, on gender equality and women's empowerment; MDG 4, on infant mortality, MDG 6, on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis; MDG 7, on access to clean drinking water and sanitation; and MDG 8, on a global partnership for development. We have shown that, with improved coordination, appropriate policies and strong development partnerships, Liberia has the potential to progress rapidly on several of the MDGs.

Despite that progress, a substantial effort is needed to advance poverty reduction, achieve universal primary education, reduce maternal mortality and ensure access to sanitation. In that regard, we face huge challenges in the areas of infrastructure, capital and human resources. We understand the interdependence and synergies among the MDGs, yet our challenging environment makes it difficult to accord equal priority to all the Goals. It is therefore important that we focus on a subset of goals that are achievable.

As we move forward, we will focus on universal primary education, child and maternal mortality, and poverty reduction through a modernized and linked agriculture sector. In that regard, our global partnerships, with which we have had great success, must go beyond aid to support enhancement in trade through the removal of trade barriers. That will break the link between aid and the MDGs.

Investing in agriculture, small-scale enterprises and infrastructure will help progress across all the MDGs. We are working especially hard to develop

small and medium-sized enterprises because they have the greatest impact on employment. To enhance the productivity of the economy and sustain progress towards the MDGs, we must invest in human capacity and strengthen public and private institutions.

One of the key drivers of success in Liberia is that our policies reflect our people's priorities in such a way that each step is nationally recognized and owned. Combined with our efforts to rebuild security, control corruption and provide quality public services, those measures will ensure that our long-term development goal is aligned with the MDGs and with our vision for a prosperous and independent Liberia.

As leaders, we intend to renew our effort to look beyond 2015 to how we can consolidate, protect and accelerate the progress. The Goals are our means to an end and to a more educated, resourceful, prosperous and empowered people.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

President Türk: Amid turmoil and action, there comes a moment for reflection and thought, and such a moment is now. Slovenia is grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his initiative and indefatigable work in the preparation of this much-needed and welcome summit. We are grateful to all Development partner who were involved in the process of its preparation and, above all, to those who work day by day for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals with a great sense of commitment.

Sometimes critics say that the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals are arbitrary and unrealistic. Such a point of view is erroneous and devoid of an understanding of the history that gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals. Let me just recall the basic facts of that history.

Two and a half decades ago, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Right to Development (resolution 41/128, annex), a seminal document that expressed high moral aspirations to fairness in development. The General Assembly called for development that benefits all and allows human potential to be expressed to the full. In the Declaration, we find the notion that the full realization of human rights is possible only through economic and social development.

But what is development? Here I come to the second historical point. The United Nations provided the answer through a series of global conferences, held in the 1990s, which thoroughly examined the pertinent aspects, from the economic and environmental to the social and gender dimensions of development, and defined specific action plans for each of those aspects. All that work was the basis for the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals and their specific, quantifiable targets. Those targets are neither arbitrary nor unrealistic. They are the result of solid work, real experience and mature policymaking.

Realism, ambition, high moral expectation and methodical sophistication have driven the process from its beginning, and they should continue to guide our work today and in the future. That is necessary because of the intrinsic importance of the Millennium Development Goals to humankind. Moreover, I emphasize very strongly that it is necessary to understand that the Millennium Development Goals represent a critical test of the vitality of the United Nations and multilateralism today.

As we look at the level of achievement today, we see a mixed story — to use a term familiar from recent United Nations documents. But a mixed story is also a story of success, or at least of partial success. Some parts of the world, including most recently in Africa, have experienced relatively high, and in some cases even very high growth rates. In the global North, where growth had been high in the past, we see the phenomenon of saturated economies and the need to measure development by factors unrelated to growth in the gross national product.

However, we have to be focused, and we have to be focused on poverty-stricken parts of the world where we do see gradual improvement. It is significant that in many parts of the developing world longevity has risen and the incidence of AIDS has declined. Levels of primary school enrolment have improved, and new information technologies have provided additional opportunities for education.

While the list of successes is significant, important policy challenges remain. First and foremost, country ownership and leadership in policy design and implementation has to be respected. Internationally organized budget support and official development

assistance can be made most effective on that basis — that is, on the basis of national ownership and leadership.

Policymaking — any policymaking — requires a careful definition of priorities. The Millennium Development Goals provide a useful methodological framework for that purpose and a bold yet realistic time horizon. Obviously, it is for the national Governments to set the priorities for their respective countries. They are the ones to decide on the needed measures to ensure better food security and basic health care for the population. They are the ones responsible for the allocation of resources to improve the availability of safe water and improved sanitation, as explained by, among others, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the President of Liberia, in the commentary she just gave. The national Governments are the ones to set the targets for primary education and for the development of comprehensive educational systems that will enable people, in particular women and girls, to enjoy adequate opportunities for education, including higher education.

Governments bear the primary responsibility for all basic policies. But they have to be supported by effective international cooperation. In a globalized world the effectiveness of international cooperation has to grow. Official development assistance, while temporarily weakened by the recent recession, has to be strengthened. The international financial institutions have to be modernized. This task includes the much-needed revision of quotas within the International Monetary Fund. Multilateral trade negotiations need to be restarted and protectionist barriers removed, eventually. Special attention in development financing and support has to be given to the least developed among developing countries.

Let me in conclusion mention just one other point. Yesterday, at the beginning of this summit, we heard the leaders of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, who spoke about policy lending and targeting of investment, about financing in macroeconomic stability and about the benefits flowing from the global trading system. However, some fundamental questions remain open. The conclusion of Doha Round trade negotiations is not yet assured. Lending policies need to be constantly adapted to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Global economic governance will be a critically important factor in the of achievement of the Goals. Let us therefore encourage the key institutions of global economic governance to live up to the legitimate expectations of our era and of the millions of people who depend on the effectiveness of their work. That is the concluding point I wish to make.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada.

Mr. Thomas (Grenada): In an address to the European Union, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reminded the world that the Millennium Declaration represents the most important promise ever made to the world's most vulnerable people — a promise, he added, that must be kept. Today, I am honoured to be among the leaders striving to keep that promise.

In the year 2000, Grenada was among the Member States of the United Nations who adopted the Millennium Declaration. However, our ability to fully deliver on our commitments was affected by a number of economic and environmental shocks. These included two hurricanes, one of which destroyed 90 per cent of our country's economy, with damages estimated at over 212 per cent of our gross domestic product. Despite our steady recovery, the advent of the global economic crisis has further delayed our progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Since the signing of the Declaration, there have been many initiatives to address the human development needs of our country. The thrust of Grenada's 2000 budget, under the theme "Growth, Equity and People's Participation in the New Millennium", initiated a number of programmes aimed at improving and monitoring living conditions.

A poverty assessment for the year 1998 indicated that 32.1 per cent of our people were living below the poverty line. Ten years later, in 2008, that figure had increased to 37.7 per cent, reflecting to some extent the 212 per cent damage to our economy. Those results have further informed our Government's policies and plans for investment in the social sector and for mainstreaming the MDGs into its national development framework.

Grenada views the MDGs as an integral tool for measuring national performance. The Government continues to implement a number of safety-net programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of our people. We expect these programmes to greatly assist in our plans to eradicate poverty and hunger.

The importance of education in eradicating poverty is well known. I am happy to report that Grenada has fully achieved the Goal of universal primary education and is on the way to achieving universal secondary education. It is our plan that by 2011 we will reach this target. Despite our limited resources we have also made significant strides in improving the literacy of our people through the introduction of a community-based literacy programme.

With regard to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, Grenada has partially achieved this Goal. Gender parity exists at all levels in our education system. The records reveal that our females have been consistently outperforming our males during the last decade. Grenada has also actively promoted the removal of disparities in income and occupational opportunities for women at all levels and in every sector of our economy.

In the area of child mortality, Grenada has made considerable progress. We have reduced child mortality by 53 per cent in the period from 2006 to 2009 for infants under the age of five. Over the past 10 to 15 years, we have been able to maintain an average immunization rate of 95 per cent. We have also made significant strides in maternal health care. Women are provided with professional prenatal care by obstetricians at our national network of health clinics.

Grenada continues its efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, with funding from the World Bank and the Clinton Foundation. Our various initiatives have recorded positive results. In the area of mother-to-child transmission, we have seen a marked reduction in the number of babies born with HIV. With the advent of the introduction of free medication, there has been a reduction in morbidity and mortality. I note, however, that the current economic difficulties threaten the sustainability of these achievements. Despite these achievements, there has been an increase in the incidence of new HIV cases. It means, therefore, that funding is required to continue our efforts in combating this deadly disease, and we call for such support.

At the same time, non-communicable diseases are at worrying levels, with 16.2 per cent of the population affected. Grenada supports the call for a high-level meeting by the United Nations on non-communicable diseases.

Grenada is strongly committed to integrating the principles of sustainable development into our country's policies and programmes. That is reflected in our national environmental policy and management strategy, our draft management and sustainable development bill and the institutionalization of our Sustainable Development Council.

This week is important for the review of the progress of the MDGs, as well as, for us small island developing States, for the review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation and for the High-level Biodiversity Meeting. This week also marks the start of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). As Chair of AOSIS, Grenada wishes to thank all the partners who have supported the Alliance in the past and are now committed to enhancing that support.

In order for Grenada to realize all of the MDGs by 2015, there is a dire need for us to build global partnerships.

Grenada is considered a middle-income country with a high level of human development. The 2009 Human Development Report ranked Grenada seventy-fourth of 182 countries. While this rating highlights development progress made in Grenada, it tends to mask its specific, multidimensional vulnerabilities as a small island developing State. Grenada had just joined other United Nations Member States in becoming a signatory to the Millennium Declaration when the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 occurred. The subsequent decline in tourism revenue, coupled with the passing of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, left a regressive mark on our economic situation. Less than a year later, another hurricane — Emily — struck our island, worsening previous damage and slowing our recovery efforts.

Despite these challenges, Grenada has made progress as a result of factors that enhance our resilience: our strong and consistent investment in the social sector, our tradition of democratic governance, our vibrant community-based organizations and the involvement in social development by non-governmental organizations, our ability to mobilize

resources, the resilience of our people, our pursuit of sound economic management, and our participation in multilateralism.

Our Government remains steadfastly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There is much to be achieved in Grenada and in the whole world, where the impact of the MDGs must be felt.

In conclusion, Grenada calls on the United Nations to assist developing countries in strengthening the institutional capacity necessary for mainstreaming and monitoring the MDGs. Drawing on this support and our best efforts, we will be closer to achieving these Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Ms. Merkel (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): The United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 has given international development policy a qualitatively new basis and a new legitimacy. It was a ground-breaking strategic decision that placed the much touted global development partnership on one common basis. It has shown that we can fight poverty, disease and hunger successfully only through a new partnership between donor and recipient countries and with a clear definition of goals.

Supported by universal principles, the Declaration is the framework for how we shape globalization equitably, in the spirit of the United Nations human rights charter. It sets out four areas in which action must be taken: peace and security, poverty reduction, protection of the environment, and promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance.

The Millennium Development Goals spell out these areas in concrete terms. Some Goals are quantitative. They represent the central international reference for development policy. The German Federal Government has also based its development policy on these Goals, thus strengthening the collective effort of all.

Sustainable progress on development requires that all four challenges be tackled, as they are mutually dependent. I am firmly convinced, therefore, that the Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals must not be interpreted as a kind of menu from which one can chose what one likes best. For we know this is true all over the world: there is no development without security and no security without development. Development policy measures cannot be effective without security, and in turn peacekeeping efforts will lead to nothing if there are no development prospects. This shows how right former Secretary-General Kofi Annan was when he called development policy an investment in a secure future.

Most importantly, however, sustainable development and economic and social progress are inconceivable without good governance and respect for human rights. However, let us be honest: that sounds simple in theory, but it is more difficult to translate the theory into practice and to draw the necessary practical consequences from it.

Ten years ago, the international community adopted the right goals. Unfortunately, today we have to admit that in all probability we will not achieve all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. But the Goals remain valid and must be implemented rigorously. As I see it, this should be the central commitment of this summit, ten years after adoption of the Millennium Development Goals.

Noticeable progress has been made on certain individual Millennium Development Goals. For example, some progress has been made on basic education, gender equality and combating hunger and poverty. However, hunger and malnutrition still prevail at an unacceptably high level. Even though 100 million fewer people have suffered from hunger this year, the number who still suffer from hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the world today is unacceptably high. We still see considerable differences, both in the achievement of individual Goals and in achievements in reaching Goals in different regions. In parts of sub-Saharan Africa in particular there are still serious gaps. The global economic and financial crisis made the prospects even worse for these vulnerable regions.

We need to ask ourselves, indeed, what we must and can do to make greater progress. There is no doubt that we must further improve the effectiveness of development policy instruments. For me, the solution is obvious. We need more results orientation. In this regard, as I see it, results-based financing is a promising approach.

In all of my talks on the margins of this conference, I have quite often discussed this with our partners, and I must say that my remarks have met with great approval. A clear results orientation can be combined with greater leeway for national policies. This allows for better accommodation of the relevant country's particularities.

There is one thing that it is important that we all accept. The primary responsibility for development lies with the Governments of the developing countries. It is in their hands to determine whether aid can be effective. For that reason, support for good governance is as important as aid itself.

Looking at today's emerging economies, we see that development policy can ultimately be successful only if there are national stewardship and national implementation of the process. That also applies to mobilizing the necessary resources. The funding of official development assistance can, apart from emergency situations, be only a contribution to national resources and never a substitute for them. Development aid cannot continue indefinitely. What is important is therefore to use limited resources as effectively as possible. This can work only through good governance that taps a country's economic potential.

The countries themselves must promote the development of a market economy, the setting-up and expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises and the strengthening of rural areas. There are, after all, an encouraging number of good projects. For without self-sustaining economic growth, developing countries will find the road out of poverty and hunger far too steep to travel. Without sustainable growth, the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved; indeed, not even the current level of progress can be maintained.

That is why Germany sees its role in development cooperation as a responsible supporter of countries' own efforts within a broad-based partnership. We in Germany know where our strengths lie, but we are also only too aware of our limitations. It is obvious that global problems call for global efforts. One example that is actually working well is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a multilateral instrument that has proven itself. The help of the Fund reaches people directly. Germany is the third-largest donor, and I will work to ensure that Germany continues to support the Fund and promote efforts to improve global health at a high level.

The implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depend on effective international organizations. That effectiveness is what people all over the world use as a yardstick for the United Nations. It is up to us, the States Members of the United Nations, to make the Organization fit to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Germany will therefore continue to work resolutely for United Nations reform.

For the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Nations, given its universality and consequent legitimacy, is the central forum for international cooperation. Germany is the third-largest contributor to the United Nations budget. We are also third among donors of development aid. Even during the financial crisis, we have not reduced our aid budget and we continue to strive to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of official development assistance as a percentage of gross national income.

We see ourselves as a reliable partner of the United Nations, convinced that understanding among nations can succeed only if cooperation is based on equality and equal rights for all countries. With this in mind, let me reaffirm Germany's commitment and Germany's responsibility as part of the collective responsibility of the international community.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

President Mugabe: I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for convening this very important Meeting. It will be recalled that we gathered in this Assembly in the year 2000 and agreed on a set of social and humanitarian deliverables that we appropriately called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We then set out separately and collectively as Member States to achieve our targets.

We now meet, five years before the target year 2015, to review the state of implementation of those Goals, share experiences, identify obstacles and possibly chart a course of accelerated action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

While there is reason to celebrate the progress attained in some areas, the challenges that remain are serious and many. The recent economic and financial crisis wreaked havoc on our previously confident march towards 2015. Resources dwindled, priorities had to be rearranged, and for many of us in the developing world, sources of support were reduced or even completely lost. Yet we remain determined, even in these circumstances, to achieve the MDGs in particular, and other internationally agreed commitments in general.

From the onset, Zimbabwe has demonstrated unwavering commitment towards the implementation of the MDGs. We set up an MDG steering committee in 2000 to track and report progress on implementation. We initially prioritized Goals 1, 3 and 6 — Goal 1 being that to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Goal 3 to promote gender equality and empower women, and Goal 6 to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases – which we viewed as critical to the achievement of all other Goals.

Even as our economy suffered from illegal sanctions imposed on the country by our detractors, we continued to deploy and direct a substantial part of our resources towards the achievement of the targets we had set ourselves. Indeed, we find it very disturbing and regrettable that, after we all had agreed to work towards the improvement of the lives of our citizens, some countries should deliberately work to negate our own efforts in that direction by insisting on sanctions against Zimbabwe. I believe that, as we sit here today and rededicate ourselves to the achievement of the MDGs in the timeframe we set ourselves, this noble effort on our part will not reach fruition unless all of us walk our talk.

Our MDGs steering committee has produced three reports since its formation. The reports show that we have registered mixed results. Despite our best efforts, we fell short of our targets because of the illegal and debilitating sanctions imposed, to which I have already referred, that have caused the incidence of poverty in Zimbabwe to remain quite high.

As a result of these punitive measures and despite our turnaround economic plan, the Government of Zimbabwe has been prevented from making a positive difference in the lives of the poor, the hungry, the sick and the destitute among its citizens. This is regrettable because Zimbabwe has a stable economic and political environment. We have the resources, and, with the right kind of support from the international community, we have the potential to improve the lives of our people.

Zimbabwe's commitment to the education of its people is well known. Since independence in 1980, there has been a massive expansion in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Much investment has gone into human capital development. Relevant policies, including the early childhood development policy, have ensured that net enrolment in schools remains high. As members may be aware, Sir, according to recent UNESCO reports, Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate in Africa.

I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that Zimbabwe is set to reach the gender parity target in both primary and secondary school enrolment. In addition, the country has made strides in attaining gender parity in enrolment and completion rates in tertiary education. We have signed and ratified a number of international and regional gender instruments and promulgated national policies and laws on gender.

While we are lagging behind in regard to equal participation in decision-making in all sectors, we hope to make real progress in this regard by 2015. There has been a slight increase in the number of women parliamentarians from 14 per cent in 1990-1995, but it is still below the 2015 target of 30 per cent.

Regarding Goal 6, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, my country has registered significant progress in lowering the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. The estimated prevalence rate in people 15-49 years old was 23.7 per cent in 2001. This rate dropped to 18.1 per cent in 2005 and declined further to 14.3 percent in 2009. We hope that it will continue to decline. The improvement was achieved despite lack of support from the international community, and at a time when even such issues as HIV/AIDS were politicized and mixed with agendas of regime change.

My Government greatly appreciates the assistance it is now receiving from the Global Fund and other agencies. We remain concerned about the incidence of HIV/AIDS in our country and hope that it will continue to decline significantly as the Government strengthens prevention efforts.

We are worried about the limited progress we have made in the area of environmental sustainability. The impact of climate change, as evidenced by recurrent droughts, flooding, unreliable and unpredictable rainfall seasons, has wreaked havoc on the lives of our people, most of whom depend on agriculture for a living.

In addition, efforts by Government to provide clean water, decent sanitation and shelter for both urban and rural dwellers, have suffered as a result of the illegal sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by some Western countries. We applaud those in the international community who have responded to our appeal for assistance to address urgent challenges in this area.

Zimbabwe remains convinced that the MDG targets are achievable. What is needed is political commitment, particularly on the part of developed countries. There is a need to ensure that commitments already made are not weakened, even in the light of new demands. Aid delivery and coordination mechanisms must not be hampered by political biases and preferences.

Let us keep the promise we made 10 years ago. Let us all strive to make 2015 a watershed year, a year when poverty, hunger, disease and other ills which are impediments to a better quality of life can be completely prevented. Let us henceforth forge a wide-ranging global partnership to make the world a better place for all its peoples, now and in the future.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Danny Foure, Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles.

Mr. Foure (Seychelles): As 2015 approaches, we cannot afford to be complacent in our efforts to fulfil the promise of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While we assess the success of our efforts so far, I would like to invite a discussion on the concept of development itself. It is our understanding of this concept which will also define how successful we are in actually improving the lives of our citizens.

Development implies progress. It implies improvement in all spheres of life. Recent events around the world have shown that there is no perfect model that can guarantee development. There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to the challenges of ensuring progress.

In fact, we are at a point in history where we must ask the question: what conditions can truly make any one country sustainable? Part of the answer lies in the fact that no country will truly be sustainable unless we can also ensure that our planet is sustainable. The Millennium Development Goals play a critical role in setting us on the path towards sustainability as countries. This will still prove fruitless unless we can also ensure the conditions for sustainability at the global level.

We commend the formation of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, co-chaired by President Tarja Halonen of Finland and President Jacob Zuma of South Africa.

While we take stock of our individual achievements, we must also address the systemic issues that will allow countries to not only reach the targets set but also improve on them.

I will take a moment to use Seychelles as an example of what a State can achieve through commitment to people-centred development. However, our achievements are also situated within the question of what has to be done to ensure that our progress is sustained.

Seychelles is well on the way towards achieving the targets laid out in the MDGs. But Seychelles today faces a development paradox. As from the early 1990s, our rapid progress, coupled with our small population of 85,000, has meant that we have exceeded the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita criteria required to benefit from development assistance and affordable credit.

To sustain our development, Seychelles borrowed heavily at commercial rates, which led to a debt crisis that culminated in 2008, when we approached the International Monetary Fund for assistance. With the help of our partners, we have survived the crisis and brought our indebtedness down to a sustainable level. It is important to note that a large number of small island developing States currently have debt-to-GDP ratios well in excess of 100 per cent. As stated by the President of the World Bank in this forum, 70 per cent of the world's poor live in middle-income countries.

We are faced with the question of how to finance the next phase of our development. Small island States

are too developed to benefit from the concessions offered to least developed countries and are not developed enough to benefit from the advantages of first-world status. In this middle-income trap, there is unfortunately a sense that there is no way up. The status quo becomes the best-case scenario, and regression is a real possibility.

We are determined to succeed despite these constraints. I am pleased to inform this summit that Seychelles will be engaging with the United Nations system in order to enter into commitments on MDG-Plus targets. We are making these commitments for the benefit of our citizens, but also to reset the challenge of development.

To make development sustainable, small island developing States need access to a wide range of development mechanisms. Most small island States are considered to be middle-income countries, but it is startling to note that their vulnerabilities correspond more closely to those of least developed countries.

In an increasingly interconnected world, the marginalization of small island developing States is on the rise, and we need the global development architecture to recognize this. We need to have formal recognition of small island developing States as a development category by the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

We are making the commitment to MDG-Plus with a focus on the sectors that we consider to be vulnerable. We need to continue to ensure that our population has access to quality education and health care. Progress depends on an educated and healthy population. Despite our achievements in the health sector, we are concerned that we do not have the necessary resources to properly tackle HIV/AIDS. Our data at the national level on vulnerable groups are still unsatisfactory. We remain ineligible to access the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as do other island States facing similar constraints.

We have a duty to ensure that we can make sustainable development a reality for the next generation. This is the true challenge of the Millennium Development Goals. For the way forward, allow me to note a few considerations that we should actively discuss and put forward as critical factors for the future of development.

First, I congratulate the Secretary-General on his leadership to find new and innovative financing mechanisms. In these times of austerity, we have heard too much about the difficulty or reluctance of countries, corporations and individuals to meet commitments on financing for development. The sustainability of our planet depends on our being able to bridge this gap.

Sustainability also depends on our ability to mobilize green financing to make environmentally friendly technology available to those for whom the latest technology remains financially prohibitive. Small islands, for example, have great access to renewable sources of energy but have no means of tapping into the technology that is necessary to harness these resources.

Climate change is of grave concern to all island States. As much of the funding allocated to climate change adaptation is directed through traditional official development assistance channels, many middle-income small island developing States are again excluded. We need to ensure that financing to adapt to climate change is properly channelled and is no longer dependent on the existing inadequate arrangements.

Secondly, allow me to mention the important role that needs to be played by regional groupings in collaboration with the international community, led by the United Nations system. Regional groupings can play a strong development role by mobilizing funding and creating integration parameters that recognize cultural and geographical specificities.

In Africa, we have also seen the positive role that regional organizations can play in enhancing peace and security — critical conditions for development. In the African region, the worsening instability in Somalia reminds us that, in certain situations, we cannot even begin to set development targets without first establishing peace and security. In the meantime, the shadow of terrorism and the threat of piracy continue to place a strain on the ability of neighbouring States to pursue development. The scale of the problem calls for all organizations to commit more time and resources to this problem.

Finally, I think it is important that we view development through a lens that is devoid of ideology and assumptions. Ideas do not need to be owned by anybody for them to be successful. Development is

about people. Let us ensure that people are at the centre of everything we do. We are all united by the Millennium Development Goals because we share the desire to improve the lives of our peoples.

Despite the challenges, we remain optimistic. The world financial crisis has not dampened our resolve — rather, it has made us more determined to truly create the conditions for a sustainable world. We say today once again that we will achieve our goals, not only as individual countries, but as citizens of the wor'd.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

Mr. Qureshi (Pakistan): The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) symbolize our collective resolve to create a better world that ensures a better quality of life for our peoples. We are therefore happy to see the MDGs at the forefront of the global development agenda and policy debate. With only five years to go to achieve what we pledged at the Millennium Summit, this important High-level Plenary Meeting provides us with a good and timely opportunity to take stock of where we stand in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to explore ways and means to accelerate progress towards their achievement.

Pakistan has produced three Millennium Development Goals reports. A fourth report was published last month. The latest MDG report for 2010 presents a frank and forthright account of where we stand in realizing the MDGs. The short- to medium-term prospects for achieving the Goals are less than promising. Until a few years ago, we were on track to achieve a number of MDGs and targets. However, the negative fallout from the security challenges posed by the ongoing fight against terrorism has severely affected the economy. The unprecedented floods that hit my country in late July, causing massive losses to crops, dwellings, livestock, services, and industrial and communications infrastructure have changed almost everything. Rehabilitation and reconstruction in the affected areas will need billions of dollars and will affect our economic recovery and achievement of the MDGs.

Notwithstanding the economic difficulties, the MDGs remain a centrepiece of our democratic Government's development efforts. They are an integral part of our medium-term development framework. Our strategy rests on the following seven pillars.

First, we need good economic management based on a pro-poor growth strategy relying on better fiscal and monetary discipline. Second, we must improve governance by consolidating democracy and ensuring the people's participation in decision-making at all levels as a means both of delivering better development results and of ensuring social and economic justice. Third, we must achieve high and broad-based economic growth, focusing particularly on the rural economy, while maintaining macroeconomic stability. In our view, agriculture holds the key to all efforts aimed at poverty alleviation.

Fourth, we must invest in and building human capital to ensure effective delivery of basic social services. Fifth, we must bring the poor and vulnerable into the mainstream of development by augmenting targeted interventions and expanding social safety nets. Sixth, we must focus on the empowerment of women and minorities and improve access to quality health care and education. Seventh, we must pursue peace and forge close bilateral and regional economic partnerships with a view to sharing and leveraging our geographic location at the crossroads of three vital regions: South, Central and West Asia.

The initiatives aimed at achieving these objectives include the following. Under the Benazir Income Support Programme, female-headed poor households are eligible for small cash transfers to meet basic needs. More than 3 million households are benefiting from this scheme. A new employment commission has been established for the creation of new jobs in the public and private sectors. A new education policy and reforms programme is geared to skill development aimed at the active and productive participation of youth in the development process. The empowerment of women has been identified by the Government as one of its top priorities. Considerable progress has been made in reducing maternal mortality and controlling diseases. However, we still have a long way to go. Ensuring environmental sustainability is a high priority, but we will require greater support from the international community to meet this challenge.

We are committed to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and keen to work with the international community to turn the challenges into opportunities. We are conscious of our responsibility

and are determined to create a more prosperous, peaceful and harmonious world for our future generations.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): In Cuba, the goals identified in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) have been almost totally achieved, and in some cases considerably exceeded. Our commitment goes beyond our national borders and has enabled us to contribute to the social development of other third-world nations. This is the direct result of a revolution whose top priority is the well-being of its people in a climate of equity and social justice. It is the fruit of the society we are building, based on solidarity. It is also a success achieved despite the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on the Cuban people by the United States Government for more than half a century.

We are encouraged and pleased by the high success rates attained by the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela, thanks to profound social policies developed by President Chávez and despite attempts to destabilize that sister nation, which continues to fight and move on. Similarly, we feel great satisfaction at the significant results shown by Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador, thanks to the commitment and actions of their Governments. The States members of the Caribbean Community have also made progress; the level of solidarity-based cooperation and integration among the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America has been a positive factor in this regard. The Government of President Lula in Brazil has also been able to achieve tangible and praiseworthy results in the social field.

However, that progress has not been dependent on international assistance from developed countries, which is almost non-existent, or on any positive change in the global economic order, which continues to be an extremely unjust, exploitive system that benefits rich countries.

The facts speak for themselves. Unfair trade continues; official development assistance (ODA) has contracted in real terms; technology transfer remains very limited and highly conditional; access for the exports of developing countries to the markets of the advanced economies remains restricted; foreign debt is being repaid, but continues to grow; and financial deregulation and corruption in developed countries have caused a global crisis with especially negative consequences for developing economies.

Consequently, and shamefully, the number of persons living in extreme poverty increased by some 36 million between 1990 and 2005. The number of people suffering from hunger throughout the world increased from 842 million in the period 1990-1992 to a record 1.02 billion in the year 2009, while 2 billion persons suffer from nutritional deficiency. In sub-Saharan Africa and some regions of Asia, poverty and hunger are at such high levels that it is very difficult to reduce them.

We must therefore ask ourselves: What kind of international cooperation are we talking about when we are not even remotely able to meet the commitment of dedicating 0.7 per cent of the gross national income of developed countries to ODA, while those same countries are mainly responsible for a global military budget that amounts to the horrifying figure of $1.4 trillion, or 2.4 per cent of the world's gross domestic product? What kind of development goals are we discussing when, due to the absence of political will on the part of developed countries, it is not even possible to reach substantial commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that jeopardize the climactic balance of our planet and represent the most significant threat to the very survival of our species?

Can we ignore the worsening of the food and water crisis in the face of an international demographic boom?

How can we speak of development and wonder if the modest goals of the year 2000 have been met without remembering that, during the Millennium Summit, we also made a commitment to peace? What kind of hope can we have to meet the MDGS by the year 2015 when, as Fidel Castro has warned, there is an increasing possibility of a military aggression against Iran that would cause millions of deaths, affect the lives of billions of people and increase global hunger and poverty?

What has happened to the commitment to total nuclear disarmament, other than the scam of reducing it to nothing more than non-proliferation? What is the rationale behind the storage and ongoing development of 25,000 nuclear warheads whose power could magnify the destruction caused in Hiroshima and

Nagasaki by a factor of 440,000? What would be the consequences of a nuclear conflict, whether local or regional, for life on the planet?

The lack of solutions to the most serious development problems and the suffering of billions of people living in poverty and underdevelopment will also affect industrialized societies — as it is already doing — where unemployment and brutal migration policies are on the rise. This problem will come knocking at all of our doors, be it through uncontrolled and unmanageable migration flows, by means of diseases and epidemics arising from conflicts generated by poverty and hunger, or as a result of events that are today unforeseeable.

The United Nations will betray its very essence if it does not recognize this reality and act now. We strongly believe that, in order to ensure the survival of our species, a new international economic and political order will have to be built on the basis of the principles of solidarity, social justice, equity and respect for the rights of peoples and every individual. If we work together, that is still possible. To achieve it, Cuba will do the impossible.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia is committed to international development cooperation and ready to intensify constructive interaction with a wide range of partners, including private sector and civil society, to ensure the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We believe that the sustainable social and economic development of all countries of the world is a crucial element of any modern collective security system.

The United Nations is a unique mechanism for the harmonization of interests of various countries and the main international forum for adopting coordinated decisions on development issues. Regional organizations and informal international groupings are concerned, including the Group of Eight and the Group of 20, are also called upon to pursue their efforts in this area in accordance with the standards of economic and humanitarian cooperation within the framework of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Over the past five years, the international community has achieved certain positive results. Nevertheless, recently published reports on the MDGs have shown uneven progress in the implementation of individual Goals as well as regional discrepancies. Unfortunately, a significant delay has been noted with respect to the Goals and targets related to universal primary education, the reduction in child and maternal mortality, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The challenges are being felt most acutely in Africa.

Clearly, the primary responsibility for achieving the MDGs rests with national Governments, yet it is obvious that radical improvement in the social and economic situation of the most vulnerable developing countries will be possible only with the coordinated support of the entire international community.

To that end, Russia has consistently increased its contribution to development cooperation. In 2008, Russian aid to developing countries totalled $220 million and, in 2009, about $800 million. That does not take into account the cancellation of billions of dollars in debt.

Naturally, we attach particular importance to assisting the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region. During the global crisis, Russia issued preferential loans and grants exceeding $4.6 billion to CIS countries in need. We initiated the creation of the Anti-Crisis Fund of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) with an initial $10 billion, $7.5 billion of which was contributed by the Russian Federation.

We call on all Member States to support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and EurAsEC to be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We intend to continue to pursue these efforts in support of the countries of the CIS and developing countries in other regions, first and foremost in Africa.

In our globalized and interdependent world, failure to address the needs of low-income countries increases the risks to the entire global economy, undermines stability and security in most regions of the world, and increases the danger of the spread of terrorism, infectious diseases and uncontrolled migration.

To counter these threats more effectively, Russia is ready, together with other countries, to more efficiently engage its scientific capacities and advanced technologies, in particular information and communication technologies, as a powerful tool to bridge the gap between the developed and developing countries and thus promote global development.

Recently, we have witnessed yet again the tremendous damage that can be inflicted on development by natural and man-made disasters. Earthquakes, floods, wildfires, tsunamis, industrial and infrastructure breakdowns not only claim thousands of human lives, but consume enormous resources to repair the damage, thus diverting resources from development goals. Clearly, increased preparedness for such disasters is costly, but it is considerably less expensive than the cost of recovery and rehabilitation.

That is why we believe it important to qualitatively improve the coordination of our joint actions to ensure a wider use of modern technologies to respond to natural and man-made disasters and to develop mechanisms for the application of such technologies in the interest of the international community. In fact, this might become a new, promising form of development cooperation. In that connection, I recall the initiative launched by President Dmitry Medvedev to establish an environmental risks insurance fund. We invite all our partners to elaborate on this initiative.

In our interdependent world, the development agenda is closely interlinked with security issues. At times, in order to pursue the objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the international community is forced to resort to such tools as economic sanctions. However, there has long been a consensus on the need to respect the so-called humanitarian limits of sanctions and to prevent their negative impact on the civilian population and social and economic development. We note that the Security Council has sought in recent years to be strictly guided by precisely this understanding.

At the same time, we cannot help but express our serious concern with the persisting practice of unilateral coercive measures imposed in a voluntaristic or reckless manner by certain States against certain developing States, in excess of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the decisions of the Security Council. We are convinced that such practices run counter to the efforts to achieve the MDGs and must be brought to an end.

It is in the interest of all countries without exception to eradicate poverty and overcome underdevelopment. A poor person cannot be free. The ability to provide decent social and economic living standards is one of the key attributes of a democratic State. These issues were thoroughly discussed at the recent Global Policy Forum on democracy standards held recently in Yaroslavl. In his address to the Forum, President Dmitry Medvedev spoke in favour of developing a universal understanding of such standards in order to help establish a positive, unifying agenda of modern international relations.

We invite all stakeholders to work together, and hope that this summit will promote more active and cohesive efforts by Governments, international financial and trade institutions, the business community and non-governmental organizations to ensure that the MDGs are met on time.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Arvin Boolell, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr. Boolell (Mauritius): The timely realization of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals is the cherished dream of all of us. Unfortunately, in the light of current trends, it is evident that we may not achieve them by the set date if the pledges made and commitments undertaken in this respect remain unfulfilled and unimplemented. It is also important to add that, if donor aid is to flow to poverty-stricken countries, it is imperative for the latter to provide a stable environment conducive to development supported by transparent and accountable Governments. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals requires a holistic approach with the engagement of Governments, civil societies, non-governmental organizations, charitable institutions, foundations and the private sector.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, I can sound a positive note because the Millennium Development Goals status report that we have just completed confirms that significant progress has been achieved on most of the targets, in spite of the global economic meltdown and the financial, fuel and food crises. These accomplishments have been made possible largely to

the sustained efforts and good policy mix undertaken by our Government since 2006, with the support and assistance of development partners.

With a view to maintaining a welfare State since independence in 1968, we have invested heavily in and placed great emphasis on the social welfare, education and health sectors. Mauritius provides free primary and secondary schooling, free health care, free bus transport to students and elderly citizens, and a universal pension to the elderly. It spends 58 per cent of its national budget on community and social services.

The objective of primary schooling for all children in Mauritius has been achieved, as the net enrolment rate in primary education is 97 per cent. Mauritian citizens have free medical and surgical treatment. Antenatal and post-natal care is provided to all women free of charge, and 99 per cent of births are attended by skilled health personnel.

Mauritius is also among the countries on the African continent with the lowest infant and maternal mortality rates. The economic empowerment of women has seen a further improvement between 2005 and 2010 with non-collateral-based access to finance for entrepreneurship. Indeed, a larger number of women entrepreneurs are now in business with sustainable income. There is also noticeable progress in placing women at higher levels of decision-making in the public sector and the judiciary. The private sector has yet to follow suit in this respect.

The elimination of extreme poverty has been a top priority for the Government, particularly since 2006, with the setting-up of an empowerment programme with the capacity to act without the rigidities of the normal state bureaucracy, and an integrated approach to the rehabilitation of the social capital of poor families. The various projects under the empowerment programme are producing concrete results.

The Government has set up a special ministry, the Ministry of Social Integration, to cater to the needs of the poor and vulnerable and to wage war on poverty. Furthermore, a number of programmes are currently being implemented under the aegis of the National Empowerment Foundation to widen the circle of opportunities for the poor, assist the vulnerable groups and eradicate poverty. These programmes adopt a policy of empowerment and rather than give handouts to the poor.

As a small island developing State, Mauritius faces several inherent constraints, such as its small size, geographical isolation and limited resources. It is also prone to the vagaries of natural disasters and the impact of climate change. However, in spite of these constraints, Mauritius has already attained major targets in the area of environmental protection. The country has taken several initiatives, such as the Maurice Ile Durable project, aimed at improving the quality of the environment and paving the way towards sustainable development. Our Government is indeed conscious of the need to ensure economic and social development without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

If we are able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we may consider that we have made a major breakthrough. However, it will not be an end in itself. We would need to sustain it and, for that matter, the most important goal would be sustainable development. In this context, the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round at the earliest possible date and aid for trade financing for development are crucial. Since one size does not fit all, I need not recall the vulnerability of small island developing States or that due consideration for special and differential treatment therefore has to be taken.

In June 2009, the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development established an ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly, which institutionalized the continuing role of the United Nations in addressing the economic crisis. It is important for the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to remain focused on issues of concern to developing countries, such as remittances of migrant workers, labour migration, international cooperation in restricting sovereign debt, concession flows and grants, whether through the operation of a global fund or development Special Drawing Rights, and the reform of Bretton Woods institutions.

Finally, I should like to reaffirm that Mauritius remains committed to meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie

Ehouzou, Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Benin.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Our civilization is going through a deep crisis. Indeed, at the start of the third millennium, extreme poverty has reached a level more horrifying than at any other time in the history of humanity. The statistics on the differences and inequalities that characterize our planet are alarming.

Today, there are over 1.8 billion human beings who live in extreme insecurity and destitution, on less than $1 a day. Forty years ago, 400 million people suffered from permanent chronic malnutrition; today, their number is estimated to be 854 million. This situation is unacceptable, especially in a world that has sufficient levels of production, resources and knowledge to put an end to such tragedies and their consequences.

Despite all the efforts made by most of the poorest States, those countries continue to face many difficulties because of poorly adapted policies imposed here and there by certain international institutions. Those difficulties are aggravated today by climate change and the various international crises related to the disorder of unbridled capitalism, including the food crisis.

About two decades after the fall of the Berlin wall, a new wall has been built. It is an economic wall and symbolizes the gap between the developed North and the impoverished South, and everything indicates that no one seems concerned about it. However, its continuation could sow the seeds of destructive conflict for our entire system.

We can bring down that wall if we have the will to do so, because all of us here, many as we are, know that the means exist to do so. To accomplish that, priorities must simply be redefined and meaning and concrete substance given to the fairness and necessary solidarity that should exist among peoples, especially in a time of crisis.

An analysis of the report assessing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (A/64/665) shows that in many countries, significant progress has been made in many areas and that the necessary resources and expertise to achieve the Goals exist. In Benin, my country, several assessments of the extent to which the Millennium Goals have been achieved have shown that it will be difficult to reach most of the MDGs in the country by 2015 if the current trends continue.

However, the progress made in the areas of education, health care and the empowerment of women through microfinancing stems from the quality of the programmes established in many sectors and the considerable support of technical and financial partners but above all from the great involvement of grass-roots communities that only ask to be supported.

In that regard, I wish to underscore that the Secretary-General acknowledged the importance and effectiveness of a Songhai project being tested in my country, Benin, after having seen it himself. The project emphasizes the development of agricultural entrepreneurship. The Secretary-General strongly recommended disseminating and repeating that experiment both in Benin and in other countries because of its great potential for food security and rational management of the environment.

Mr. Osman (Sudan), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

However, in the current international economic crisis, the major challenge continues to be the mobilization of resources to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs by 2015. Like many other countries, in concrete terms, Benin can achieve all the Goals that it endorsed in 2000 only by mobilizing three times the public resources currently allotted to the education and rural development sectors.

Words and declarations have no meaning if they are not followed up with robust action. Our many conferences often conclude in declarations that echo our good intentions and promises. Benin expresses the keen desire to see them translated into concrete action. That will help to enhance multilateralism.

Benin also desires the poor countries to make greater effort in terms of governance, improving public policies, strengthening ownership and making better use of the resources made available to them. That is the only way that we will be able to achieve the Goals we set by 2015.

With respect to institutions for financing for development, primarily those of the so-called Bretton Woods era, they must at last realize that the criteria of convergence, conditionality and other remedies that they administer to fragile countries only aggravate the

plight of the most vulnerable populations of those countries.

Poverty is not inevitable. Therefore it is up to us to strive together to stop it becoming a weapon of mass destruction for humanity. It is in all our interests, and I am firmly convinced that, with a little more political will, we can achieve that.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. John Silk, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Silk (Marshall Islands): When the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came to life through the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the international community made a lasting promise to the Marshallese people to take all necessary action to reach basic social development goals.

While we can report some positive progress, much remains to be done both by the Marshall Islands Government and by our international partners. We can expect the international community to boost its responsiveness only if we are willing to undertake improved efforts at home. I am pleased to announce that the Marshall Islands Cabinet has endorsed efforts towards a new national development plan that directly embeds progress on the MDGs in national strategies.

I can point to positive progress towards reaching two key MDG targets in the Marshall Islands: we have improved access to basic education for all and we have steadily improved maternal health and child welfare. However, these bright beacons are clouded by serious barriers to reaching other MDG targets. While we have avoided dire poverty, indicators suggest that general hardship and hunger are worsening, not improving. We are not on track to providing decent work and full employment. While we have made some advances on gender issues, violence against girls and women remains a serious problem. Serious improvements need to be made towards addressing HIV, malaria and other illnesses.

We are restrained by political inaction on the Mauritius Strategy — the focus of global, island-specific efforts. Our private sector is woefully underdeveloped, and we remain reliant on foreign assistance. As a low-lying nation, we must build immediate and far greater intersections between our social development efforts and strategies to address climate change.

Rather than witness the global community tear itself apart fighting over the amount of financing — and more resources are needed — we first need to focus our efforts on seriously boosting the effectiveness of the rich opportunities already afforded us. Honest, real and outcome-oriented discussions are needed among donors and recipients on creative and immediate strategies for aid effectiveness and coordination. From the perspective of a small island nation, the myriad of unconnected aid opportunities are at best a confusing patchwork attempt, leaving a tragic gap between the intentions of donors and delivery to local communities.

A very obvious suggestion would be to build better bridges among the Mauritius Strategy, the island-focused development strategy and the MDGs. In so doing, the international community could consider moving towards defining a formal category of vulnerable island nations, as well as developing precise goals and benchmarks within the Mauritius Strategy to measure international progress.

The Marshall Islands is a large ocean State. Our tuna fisheries resources represent the primary pathway to economic development, but the key stocks have been pushed beyond sustainable levels. We will be able to advance towards key MDGs and to transform our economy only if our political partners implement commitments towards both curbing unsustainable fishing levels and helping us to achieve our own fisheries development aspirations. Right now, we realize very limited benefits. Only about one penny from a can of Pacific tuna comes to us. Here, I can offer another simple suggestion: regional and global fisheries discussions need to be far better integrated within broader development processes, and specific development strategies need to be identified.

Finally, we must improve our own domestic commitment. The MDGs can not be a "set it and forget it" exercise. And today I can announce our need for assistance in assembling an MDG acceleration team as a component of our national planning efforts to assist in further Government ownership and integration of the MDGs. This small team will not only assist with planning, but will also work across agencies to pursue immediate, practical action. For example, several Government offices have already integrated MDG

targets into agency planning and performance budgeting. This welcome effort should be scaled up. We need to sit with our partners and examine how our existing assistance and development pathways can best address the MDGs and identify means for measurable progress.

The impact of climate change threatens to unravel whatever progress we have made and will make towards the MDGs. Our Government has recently endorsed a climate change road map, with concrete strategies to cut our own emissions and achieve a climate-resilient future. With international assistance, we must work in lockstep on efforts to address both our core social development under the MDGs and also climate adaptation.

Today I can announce our Government's renewed attention and commitment towards a global effort in achieving the MDGs. I can only hope that the rest of the international community, and in particular our closest partners, will join us in turning words into reality.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pastor Micha Ondo Bile, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Micha Ondo Bile (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to address this High-level Meeting, representing His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, who, due to many important and high-level State responsibilities, is unable to personally attend this important event. On his behalf, I extend our most sincere congratulations to the Co-Chairs and to the other members of the Bureau.

Our presence at this meeting reaffirms Equatorial Guinea's commitment to multilateralism as a whole and to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, and on behalf of the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and his Government, I convey my warmest and most sincere congratulations to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and again commend his hard work and leadership in the service of humanity, and in particular his efforts to promote sustainable development in the broadest sense.

This High-level Meeting devoted specifically to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is an excellent opportunity for all of us to lend new momentum to the attainment of those Goals. Moreover, we believe that this High-level Meeting provides us with an opportunity to chart the course to be followed and to draw up a realistic road map or programme of action with specific methodologies to accelerate progress in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/64/665) once more stresses that the goals and targets set out in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) have not yet been achieved to the extent we all would desire and that most countries, in particular the developing countries and the least developed countries, remain marginalized in the world economy and are impacted by extreme poverty.

Progress towards achievement of the Millennium Goals has always been eroded by a series of negative factors that include a reduction in flows of official development assistance, serious structural obstacles, the declining price of commodities and, in some countries, violent conflicts and post-conflict situations, natural disasters — and the list goes on. In addition, the world recession has further obstructed the path to 2015. Indeed, the events that have taken place and the delays that we have encountered since the Millennium Declaration was adopted in 2000 mean that we must achieve consensus among all countries regarding the challenges and fundamental priorities for action, and that consensus must then be turned into collective action.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea understands that in the context of implementing the Millennium Declaration, a series of decisions must be taken that commit and encourage all States to meet the commitments collectively entered into in the year 2000, when for the first time consideration was given to achieving the Millennium Goals. It is thus a question of standard-setting, of measures and reforms that should guide all States, provided the necessary political will can be mobilized on the part of all countries making up the international community. All partners involved must also be fully committed to the fight for the cause of development.

For the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Millennium Development Goals are a serious

commitment to sustainable development. For this reason, the Government of my country has taken a series of economic, legislative, legal and administrative measures to give effect to the Millennium Declaration.

Over the last 10 years, the economic performance of Equatorial Guinea has been particularly exceptional, thanks to the discovery and processing of major oil reserves. This situation implies our economy's dependence on oil and thus its fragility.

According to estimates in a study of poverty in our country, some two thirds of the population continue to suffer penury. To mitigate the impact of poverty and respond to the Millennium Declaration, the Government the Republic of Equatorial Guinea embarked on a long-term process of development strategy planning, which has led to the holding of two national economic conferences. The second of these conferences was held in November 2007, in the context of which our Government established strategic guidelines and priorities that constitute and underpin the Plan for Social and Economic Development and Poverty Reduction in Equatorial Guinea by the Year 2020.

The view of sustainable development adopted by our Government is centred on 2020, which implies the achievement of the Millennium Goals through increased efforts on our part, the broadening of revenue sources and the training of human resources in order to achieve appropriate growth levels for a competitive economy that is able to eradicate poverty and hunger. That is as set forth in the current plan of action for the development of Equatorial Guinea by 2020, drafted by our Government, as mentioned, in 2007.

Instruments such as the Fund for Social Development, adopted by the Government of Equatorial Guinea in 2006 with the diligent assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), are important strategic inputs designed to help our country to achieve the Millennium Goals. The Fund is intended to improve social services provided by the Government for the benefit of the population to facilitate their access to basic public services of appropriate quality and which guarantee sustainable human development and a well-protected environment.

The principal objective of the Fund is to develop the capacities of ministries and institutions in the social sector and to train Equatorial Guinea's human resources in the methods and procedures as well as in the drafting, management, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of social programmes and projects.

Financing for this Fund comes from the Government's own resources, and $15 million have been made available by USAID for technical assistance. The Government has undertaken to allocate a further sum of $72 million for the first five-year phase of execution of concrete projects, which represents 0.8 per cent of the gross domestic product, according to International Monetary Fund statistics.

My Government has donated substantial sums to contribute to the development of actions designed to promote sustainable human development. To name just a few, there is the $3 million contribution to UNESCO to underwrite the Prize for Research in the Life Sciences, and to the African Union a contribution for setting up the African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation. To those we would add other financial contributions made in recent years to both the Secretary-General and United Nations agencies and entities to bolster their endeavours around the world.

Those measures bear witness to my country's firm commitment to achieving the Millennium Goals and in particular to fully complying with the objectives established in the most recent international conferences in the social, economic and related fields. The examination by those conferences of the integrated and coordinated implementation of the results is the principal object of this High-level Meeting taking place within the framework of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The cause of development and above all the fight against the poverty and hunger that assault in the world today can be promoted only through broad, deep and sustained international cooperation among all States, with the firm commitment and support of the organs and agencies of the United Nations, and including the private sector and civil society.

In our view, the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration can be achieved by 2015. However, that requires that, starting now, we break from the routine, that we dramatically accelerate and intensify our actions and our commitment. To achieve the Millennium Goals, it is absolutely essential that we have greater solidarity within the diversity that exists

between all States, whatever their size, and institutions that comprise the international community.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergei Martynov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Martynov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Yesterday and this morning a great many opinions have been voiced from this rostrum, including those related to such important issues as who was at fault and what has been the major impediment to progress for States of the world in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Those who single out the financial and economic crisis as the primary reason for feeble and fragmented progress and limitation are quite right. One cannot but agree also with those who link those failures with the unwillingness of the great Powers to cooperate with other States on equal terms in order to overcome a wide array of new global threats and challenges.

In these circumstances, a no less important question arises: what is to be done? From our viewpoint, the situation requires tighter multilateral approaches, including agreed measures to strengthen the global partnership for development — Goal 8. Otherwise, the lack of tangible progress towards achieving the Goals will not be overcome.

I emphasize here that a comparatively new instrument among the United Nations tools — a policy of global partnerships, actively advocated by the Republic of Belarus — has been ever more clearly proving its effectiveness and advantages in addressing the most acute international problems. The most convincing and recent example is a global partnership against slavery and human trafficking, which was initiated by Belarus five years ago and has been successfully taking shape at the United Nations. It recently found expression in resolution 64/293, a consensus resolution of the General Assembly adopting the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Another positive example is that the international community, coordinated by the United Nations, managed not only to adopt the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288 and annex) but also within that framework to take a number of balanced and result-oriented steps that have already proved effective. And for a number of years now we have had every reason to commend the combined efforts of States within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

On the other hand, in cases where real partnership relations have not been achieved we observe the pursuit of short-term benefits and a disregard for the interests of others. On that basis, as we know from experience, in such situations it is impossible in principle to achieve decisive progress. That has been proved convincingly by the results - or rather by lack of the results — of the most recent United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

For the same reason we still have a long way to go to successfully conclude the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Moreover, developed countries are clearly hardening their positions and imposing protectionist measures in international trade. In current crisis conditions, that most painfully affects developing countries and middle-income countries with open economies. Clearly, this is not partnership.

The failure to establish genuine partnership relations means that we are not yet in a position to progress toward solving the problem of global energy security, turning advanced energy technologies into an asset and a driving engine of progress for all States. Belarus has consistently advocated such an approach.

Efforts to overcome the economic and financial crisis have yielded mixed yet illustrative results. There have been clear successes specifically in those fields where real partnership, flexibility and mutual understanding have been forged — for example, progress in interaction with international financial institutions. At the same time, the international community has yet to make progress on agreed approaches to stimulating national economies. The reason is the difference in attitudes of the key players to meeting the crucial goals in this post-crisis period.

Global partnerships justify their value not only by virtue of the depth and diversity of the problems to be resolved. Today their mechanisms are timely and efficient because they serve as a component of effective global governance, towards which the entire system of international relations is now moving.

It is encouraging that by establishing global partnerships in deed, and not only in name, the United Nations elevates its status and authority as an organization capable of playing the role of an

institution for effective global governance. I stress that good governance at such a level demands looking to the future and pondering future challenges, even though they have not historically figured prominently enough in international relations. Foreseeing and identifying the problems in a timely way, before they become full-blown, and uniting partners for their successful solution guarantees a reliable and prosperous future.

Belarus would like to suggest a promising idea, the foundation of which, we believe, should be laid down today. This idea can be identified as "Help Future Generations Prosper". It is directly related to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The essence of our proposal is to establish a new global partnership for defending and promoting the interests of youth.

Analysis of the implementation of the MDGs has led us to the unambiguous conclusion: it is more important than ever to activate efforts in the sectors that directly or indirectly affect the prosperity of future generations. Their needs should be a priority in working to achieve the MDGs and in general in the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. This is particularly relevant since youth is having an ever greater impact on society and is becoming its most creative sector in all parts of the world without exception.

In our view, the United Nations could play a key role in identifying specific mechanisms to support talented young people and train young managers of a new type. It is also necessary to assist in preventing the threats that are common for young generations in many countries, such as drugs, alcohol, violence and shirking civic responsibilities. The role of the United Nations in this aspect of our comprehensive idea would at first be at least to hold a General Assembly thematic debate to discuss global good practices in fighting the social alienation of the youth.

Global partnership is an effective mechanism for mutual understanding, ensuring results. Building our common future, we all need to be sympathetic partners in order not to share the fate of the tower of Babel.

An indicative road map of the specific proposals of Belarus will be circulated as an attachment to the text of my statement.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Peter Shanel Agovaka, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of the Solomon Islands.

Mr. Agovaka (Solomon Islands): This occasion provides us the opportunity to gauge our collective progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ten years ago, when in this Assembly we committed to creating a better future for our populations, we did not foresee the number of crises that have emerged along the way. Since then, we have experienced food, financial, energy and climate change crises, testing and reversing the MDG gains made in earlier years. Moving forward to the remaining five years will require us to examine mechanisms to ensure that adequate resources have targeted MDG benchmarks.

Progress in Solomon Islands has been mixed and uneven. Our scorecards on the MDGs show some improvement, though we are generally off-track, overall, in achieving all our goals. There are domestic disparities in progress, especially between the formal and informal sectors of our society. Focus on the formal sector by our partners has seen slower progress in rural areas, where 80 per cent of the population resides. Climate change has seen our population making compromises and is creating pockets of poverty in various locations throughout the country. If we are to address this crisis alone, we will need new and additional resources and would appreciate transfers of technology.

Solomon Islands is on its own in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action, which is supposed to be the vehicle for achieving the MDGs. Our vulnerability and special situation have been overlooked by partners adopting a one-size-fits-all approach through regional frameworks. There is a need to realign our approaches and link them to national development priorities to enhance national ownership and long-term sustainability.

The recent broadening of cooperation between Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) and the wider United Nations membership is slowly paying off. Bilaterally, cooperation is allowing for policy space and flexibility in the implementation of the respective development strategies of Pacific SIDS. Italy and Austria have provided an excellent model for

cooperation, and all, including Turkey, continue to support our rural renewable energy programme.

Investment in education remains a cross-cutting issue that allows populations to enhance their economic productivity towards achieving all MDGs. Our partner Cuba continues to train our future doctors, for which we remain grateful. Papua New Guinea, our close neighbour, continues to provide a range of scholarships for our students. My Government is equally pleased to record a new partner, Portugal, in supporting our education system. Taiwan, our multi-sectoral partner, along with our traditional partners, New Zealand, the European Union and Australia, has supported our free primary education. However, the dispersed populations scattered throughout the islands have seen slow progress. Australia and other development partners have invested in eradicating malaria, and it is our hope that in the remaining five years that the programme will spread nationwide.

In looking ahead, the world needs to identify concepts that will accelerate the pace of MDG achievements. The MDG debt swap proposed a few years ago needs to be reviewed as we begin the final five years of our time-bound commitments. The concept involves developing countries using domestic capital to invest in the MDGs in return for payment of debt to partners. Carbon-neutral initiatives must be externally supported. Solomon Islands is in the process of joining the International Renewable Energy Agency.

The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) underscores the relevance of all major United Nations conferences, including the Mauritius Strategy review and the forthcoming least developed countries conference. The political declaration of the small island developing States calls for a special category for small island developing States within the wider United Nations system, which we support. Equally important is the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, scheduled for May 2011, which will undertake a similar exercise of reviewing the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the most vulnerable populations represented at the United Nations.

Many of the issues raised are global in nature and need global solutions. There needs to be a global outreach with national deliverables. First, our collective effort to remove agricultural trade barriers via the World Trade Organization Doha talks, in order to have a fair and just trading system, is a must. Secondly, a legally binding climate change agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol are also essential. We would like to see all partners outside the UNFCCC process play their role in contributing to the health of our atmosphere, including Taiwan as an observer.

Thirdly, the implementation of a negotiated declaration on the MDGs should be adopted at this High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs. The draft declaration we have before us is not a series of good intentions but a declaration of concrete action that will need vigorous implementation.

I would like to close by stating that there are enough financial resources, technology and good will to realize our goals. The world needs new collaboration and alliances with new initiatives, which Solomon Islands is committed to honouring.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. José Maria Neves, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Mr. Neves (Cape Verde) (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is with satisfaction and pride that I address this Assembly to present the investments, commitments and results of Cape Verde in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Cape Verdeans share a vision for the future: a modern, competitive country with social cohesion and a healthy environmental. We have a strategy to transform the country into an international services centre. We are acting to transform our comparative advantages into sources of competitive advantages in order to accelerate the pace of economic growth and employment generation, to ensure the best possible income for families, and to combat poverty and all forms of social exclusion.

We are modernizing our infrastructure, developing human capital, investing strongly in people and promoting the private sector. As a result of good governance and the consolidation of global partnerships, the country has added consistent gains to its process of development. Great advances have been made in various sectors: education, health, the empowerment of women and strengthening of civil

society, demonstrating the Government's strong political commitment to reducing poverty.

Cape Verde is on course to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Our growth and poverty reduction strategy integrates an approach that cuts across gender, with the purpose of responding to the challenges faced by the population's most vulnerable group — the women of Cape Verde. There is no development without gender equality and equity. Our strategy aims at empowering women in rural areas and creating employment for mothers who are heads of poor households. We are making ongoing efforts to adopt policy measures that ensure gender equality and equity. With respect to the participation of women in politics, while only 15 per cent of members of Parliament are women, Cape Verde now has parity within its Government. Of the 14 Ministers, eight are women.

In the area of health, we have seen an increase in life expectancy and a reduction in maternal and infant mortality. Today, 98 per cent of births take place in hospitals with specialized assistance. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 0.8 per cent.

We are investing strongly in education and professional training. People are our only natural resource, and we have to train and transform them into strategic resources for development. The education rate is 96 per cent, and Cape Verde has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education. We are also investing in social security in order to universalize decent housing for all. In information technology, communications, renewable energy, water supply, agriculture and the food industry, I believe we have made significant progress, especially in the past few years, though we still have enormous challenges ahead of us. We are poor in terms of traditional natural resources, with barely 10 per cent of our land can be developed. Cape Verde remains vulnerable, both environmentally and economically, and is subject to the negative effects of climate change. Our archipelagic situation requires enormous resources for infrastructure development.

We are at a critical moment in the life of our country. We are taking off, and we need to harness all our energies to achieve a radical transformation of our islands. We have shown that development is possible if we have a vision, appropriate strategies, political will, freedoms, democracy and good sense. Now more than ever, we need partnerships to help us take a leap forward and build our future.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Civil Aviation of the Republic of Fiji.

Mr. Kubuabola (Fiji): At the outset, may I, on behalf of the peoples and Government of Fiji, take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his foresight in proposing, and this Assembly for endorsing the convening of this high-level Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) progress review summit. From the survey of our collective progress made thus far, and as we look forward to 2015, it is now apparent that the bright spots of progress differ from one country to another.

With respect to the status of its success in meeting the MDGs, Fiji has made progress towards achieving all eight Goals. Our second report indicates that we are on track to achieve five of the eight by 2015. These include MDG 2, on universal primary education; MDG 4, on reduced child mortality; MDG 5, on reduced maternal mortality; MDG 7, on ensuring environmental sustainability; and MDG 8, on developing a global partnership for development.

The report also suggests that achieving three of the Goals — MDG 1, on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; MDG 3, on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment; and MDG 6, on combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases — will be a major challenge. The Government is fully committed and positive that these Goals will be realized.

While MDG 2 has already been effectively achieved in Fiji through strong and effective education policies, of critical concern to us is the eradication of extreme poverty under MDG 1. We have identified a number of factors that have contributed to Fiji's constraints in making steady progress in this area. They include the global financial crisis; volatile global oil prices, which have led to inflationary pressures, thus reducing real incomes and pushing those at the threshold of poverty into poverty; unresolved political challenges, which have had a negative effect on investment, exports and employment growth, thus contributing to poverty; and unproductive use of land resources.

While the first two factors are effectively beyond the control of a small island economy like ours, we are able to control the last two. Accordingly, the Government has embarked upon an economic and socio-political reform agenda as the foundation of its sustainable development framework, particularly in the area of good governance. Fiji has made significant efforts to strengthen this aspect by developing a culture of sustainable and democratic good governance that will come to represent the dominant political thinking and behaviour of the people of Fiji. The aim is to create a Government structure that is truly participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable and transparent, and that follows the rule of law. It ensures that corruption will be minimized, the views of minorities taken into account, and the voices of society's most vulnerable heard.

Land reform initiatives are also being implemented to ensure the meaningful and maximal exploitation of our abundant resources. Additionally, the Millennium Development Goals have been integrated into the People's Charter, our strategic framework for change and road map to ensure the successful implementation and achievement of MDG targets.

For the remaining five years, Fiji is convinced that addressing these challenges truly calls for innovative approaches, matched by appropriate institutions, committed programmes, justice and equity in sharing resources, and above all, a stronger and committed global partnership. In this connection, the Government of Fiji is committed to undertaking a comprehensive national analysis of progress in MDG implementation, developing national breakthrough action plans for MDG acceleration, revisiting its policies for mainstreaming and integrating MDGs into the national development plan, formulating efficient domestic resource management for achieving the MDGs, and conducting regular monitoring and assessment of MDG progress.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General was right in saying that the inability to achieve the MDG targets would be an unacceptable failure from both the moral and the practical standpoints. Back in the year 2000, Fiji committed itself to achieving the MDGs, and we continue to hold true to this commitment. As a Government, we know that any benefits accruing from our success will directly affect our own people. The leaders of the world foresaw that 10 years ago and we are committed to making it a reality.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kalombo T. Mwansa, Minister of Defence and Special Envoy of the President of Zambia.

Mr. Mwansa (Zambia): With only five years remaining before the year set for achieving the MDGs, we have taken stock of where we are. Zambia has made significant progress in improving the macroeconomic environment, leading to a sustained economic growth of 6.1 per cent over the past five years. Furthermore, the country has put into place development frameworks, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the National Five-Year Strategic Development Plan (2007-2011), which provide periodic monitoring of MDG indicators, as part of its commitment to the achievement of MDGs.

Efforts have also been made in implementing pro-poor interventions. These include increasing farmer input support in the form of fertilizer and seed from 200,000 beneficiaries to more than 800,000. It is noteworthy that food production has increased over the years and the food security situation has improved, making the prospect of reducing hunger bright.

Furthermore, accelerating rural development is prime on our development agenda. We are improving the state of our feeder roads, thereby enhancing service delivery and access to markets for our rural population. These interventions are reinforced by addressing human resource deficiencies in rural areas. In 2009 alone, we recruited a total of 1,610 frontline medical personnel and also embarked on improving the work environment for health workers by, among other things, implementing the rural retention scheme and building houses for rural health workers. Consequently, the staff head-count increased from 24,407 in 2008 to 27,524 in 2009.

We believe that these measures will significantly contribute to meeting the MDGs related to the reduction of child mortality, improving maternal mortality, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. We are determined to vigorously maintain these initiatives so that our potential to meet health-related MDGs remains on course.

With regard to achieving universal primary education, similar strategies as to those being

implemented in the health sector are being pursued. Between 2005 and 2009, my Government has recruited and deployed over 25,000 teachers, and, between 2008 and 2010, close to 6,000 basic school classrooms were built. These measures target the infrastructure and human resource deficits in rural areas. Most of the targets under this MDG continue to be on track. I am pleased to report that Zambia is set to meet this MDG.

Zambia is tirelessly addressing gender-related imbalances through affirmative action and programmes such as scholarships for assisting girls to excel at basic, secondary and university education levels. In addition, Zambia has established the Citizens' Economic Empowerment Fund with a view to empowering as many rural women as possible. In this regard, Zambia welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, (UN Women), the new United Nations entity for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The positive economic growth that Zambia continues to enjoy has been made possible with support from our cooperating partners. Besides the debt relief accessed in 2004 after having reached the halfway completion point, we received a total of $798 million from external partners through various donor-support mechanisms. In 2008, this amount was increased to $856 million and is suspected expected to further increase before the end of 2010.

Zambia continues to engage positively with its cooperating partners through a number of modalities for dialogue, which are proving good platforms for attracting development assistance while ensuring that Zambia's debt position is within sustainable levels.

Zambia still faces challenges in meeting MDG 7, "Ensure Environmental Sustainability", due to high poverty levels and lack of alternative sources of livelihood for poor people. This has resulted in most of our deprived putting pressure on environmental resources. Nevertheless, policies and programmes are being formulated to support and promote sustainable environmental management.

As I conclude, I would like to say that the commitment to ensuring the attainment of MDG 8, "Develop a Global Partnership for Development", is critical if the overall Millennium Development Goals are to be attained. Most the interventions that support the attainment of the Goals depend on not only on a good national supportive environment, but also on the sustained and adequate financial inflows. We allude to the commitments made at the G8 Gleneagles Summit to increase aid to Africa. I therefore call upon cooperating partners to honour their pledges and also to ensure a balanced distribution of official development assistance.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): Ten years ago, world leaders committed pledged to "spare no effort" to assure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was a promise that resonated with people everywhere. Today, we ask ourselves: why for so many has this promise remained unfulfilled?

Why is our common quest to achieve these Goals so far off- track? Where are the resources that were pledged? In a world of increasing prosperity, expanding knowledge and growing interdependence, why should hunger, disease and deprivation remain the lot of millions, indeed billions, of people?

These questions deserve answers. All countries, rich or poor, of whatever political, economic, ideological or other orientation, can make a difference to the fate of these teeming millions if we work together in genuine partnership. Indeed, it is imperative that we do so.

Guyana has adopted a progressive and integrated approach. Prudent management of macroeconomic and fiscal policy and the prioritizing of social and infrastructural development have allowed us to make significant progress on several of the MDGs, and to weather the worst impacts of the financial and food crises. We have witnessed significant achievements in education, the environment, gender equality, poverty eradication, and health, in particular, in reversing the trend in mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Guyana has moved a step further by developing a low-carbon development strategy to place our economy on a low-carbon trajectory. Last November, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Norway to implement a national-scale model for deploying forests to address climate change without compromising sovereignty or national development priorities. It will help to finance critical

transformational infrastructure and low-carbon business initiatives, and advance Guyana's long-standing commitment to people-centred development through greater investment in the social sector. It represents a model of partnership between developing and developed countries to advance common development and environmental objectives. Despite the progress we have made at the national level, we cannot be complacent, as serious challenges remain.

At the global level the evidence points to important successes, but also to significant shortcomings. The overarching lesson made clear by the evidence before us is that with adequate resources, the right policies and actions at all levels and renewed political commitment, the MDGs remain eminently achievable. As the report of the Secretary-General makes clear:

> "The shortfalls in progress towards the Millennium Development Goals are not because they are unreachable or because the time is too short, but rather because of unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient interest in sustainable development." (*A/64/665, para. 116*)

Several pervasive challenges remain that require a global response. Action is needed to strengthen the systems of global governance in order to create a more equitable, representative and effective multilateral system; to reform and modernize the international financial institutions to better enable them to respond to and prevent financial and economic emergencies; to strengthen the capabilities and capacities of the United Nations to discharge its mandates more effectively and efficiently; and to address shortcomings of the international trading system. We see the need for determined efforts to increase agricultural production and productivity, to counter the increased incidence of communicable diseases, and to address the overriding threat posed by climate change.

It is imperative that we direct increased attention to addressing the factors at the domestic and international levels that perpetuate poverty and inequality. It is clear that a global system premised on significant inequalities is unsustainable. Persistent inequality within and between countries and deep-seated deprivation undermine peace and security, the enjoyment of all human rights and the efficacy of development efforts, especially for the most vulnerable segments of populations in all countries.

In this regard, it is appropriate to recall the clear understanding of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) that there would be increased direct support for the efforts of developing countries to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs. This understanding remains fundamental to the kinds of partnerships necessary to assure achievement of the MDGs. While fluctuating financial, political and economic fortunes invariably impact the timeliness of delivery, they should not diminish our commitment to the poor, especially in times of crisis, or reduce the determination to work in partnership.

This Meeting can be deemed a success only if, by its conclusion, we recommit to ensuring that the MDGs can be achieved in every country. It represents, arguably, our last best opportunity to provide a turning point in accelerating progress in the achievement of the MDGs. Let us together — Governments, civil society, the private sector and all other actors — ensure that the solemn declarations made and promises undertaken indeed translate into meaningful improvements for the peoples of the world. Let us not be found wanting.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lucien Marie Noël Bembamba, Minister of Finance of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Bembamba (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me, on behalf of my delegation, congratulate Mr. Deiss on his election to preside over the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and express in particular our satisfaction at seeing him preside over this important meeting. I also convey our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his steadfast readiness to defend the ideals of the United Nations.

The Millennium Summit of September 2000 sparked great hope, because the heads of State and Government who met there proposed an ambitious yet realistic global development policy aimed at achieving by 2015 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which serve as useful yardsticks for measuring the vast chasm between the world in which we live and the world we seek. Ten years after their adoption, results on their implementation are mixed.

In Burkina Faso, despite the many challenges to economic expansion, progress has been made in

fighting poverty. The most meaningful progress has been in the area of access to drinking water, where the percentage of the population with access to potable water has risen from 43.1 per cent in 1994 to nearly 80 per cent in 2010. Similarly, with respect to education and health care, encouraging results have been achieved, in particular with respect to net enrolment rates, infant and maternal mortality rates, and above all the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS, which stabilized at around 1.6 per cent in 2008, as compared to 7.17 per cent in 1997, while free retroviral drugs have been available since 1 January.

Nevertheless, major challenges persist with respect to gender equality, improving the health care system, education and adult literacy, and protecting the environment. Burkina Faso's achievement of the MDGs could also be further undermined by the effects of the financial crisis and climate change, which has had certain visible effects, including flooding.

If we are to win the battle to achieve the MDGs, we shall require synergistic action and robust political will. It is high time that we send new signs of commitment and will. Burkina Faso for its part wishes to reaffirm here what we believe to be fundamental in the battle to achieve the MDGs. First, the MDGs must be viewed as rights of our peoples. Secondly, the MDGs must more than ever be an integral part of global development strategies and taken systematically into account in policies and programmes, serving as a frame of reference and space for dialogue with our development partners, be they the international financial institutions and organizations or civil society. Thirdly, policies to mobilize resources for the MDGs must draw on innovative pillars to accelerate the process.

Finally, the struggle to attain the MDGs must involve all nations, without any exception.

With respect to expectations, the shortfall in financial resources is a major constraint in achieving the MDGs. That is why we are taking this opportunity to urge donors to work to ensure the success of ongoing discussions, especially on replenishment, with the International Development Association and the World Bank Group, as well as with the African Development Fund and the African Development Bank Group.

Likewise, we reaffirm our earnest hope for improved market access in a more equitable international trade environment. We have always firmly believed that equitable trade is needed if we are to accelerate economic growth, in particular for low-income countries, and if we are to generate substantial resources to fund their development and help them to attain the MDGs.

In this period of globalization, all peoples must participate in the international community's efforts to attain the MDGs. That is why Burkina Faso hopes that the Republic of China, Taiwan, will be a full-fledged partner in the implementation of the MDGs.

Together, we need to work in greater solidarity to attain the MDGs and to join together in building a better world for all the peoples of our planet.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Amira El Fadal, Minister of Welfare and Social Security of the Republic of the Sudan.

Ms. El Fadal (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset, on behalf of my delegation and on my own account, to thank the organizers of this important event for their efforts in convening this High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in promoting an agreed programme of action from now through 2015, the deadline for the attainment of the MDGs, which is now less than five years away. We meet today to forge effective policies and constructive initiatives to face the increasingly daunting challenges and to build on what we have already achieved on the implementation of the MDGs.

There is no doubt that today's international economic, financial and trade situation is an obstacle to development in developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, and poses a genuine threat to their peoples. That is true for a number of reasons, such as decreasing official development assistance (ODA), unfair international trade conditions, restrictions on developing country exports to world markets and low commodity prices, as well as the heavy burden of external debt and the negative impact of globalization. In addition to those challenges, hunger, disease and internal strife are additional challenges to those societies and to the wider international community. That is why the level of attainment of the MDGs will continue to fall short of the aspirations of the African continent.

The international community must recognize that rapidly growing challenges and their negative consequences demand collective efforts under the leadership of a capable and effective international organization such as the United Nations, which devises creative initiatives that can help us face those challenges.

My country has made great efforts to attain the MDGs. We have made considerable progress in carrying out projects benefiting marginalized sectors of our society, with a view to easing poverty and improving education and health care — in particular maternal and child health and combating disease.

On poverty, the Sudan has implemented a series of five-year plans aimed at achieving economic and social development and alleviating poverty. We have set up a supreme council to monitor the preparation and implementation of a national anti-poverty strategy, chaired by His Excellency the President of the Republic. We have increased expenditures on the poor to 9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) as of 2009. We have allocated 12 per cent of commercial bank credits to microfinancing. The zakat charity mechanism has contributed through an interdependent poverty-alleviation project for poor families valued at more than $200 million annually.

The Sudan has also experienced positive developments in the field of education as part of an official national policy and strategy, in particular by providing free compulsory education for all children, especially girls. On the empowerment of women, we have forged a national strategy to promote and empower women in all sectors of society. In 2005 we adopted a national plan on violence against women, and within the Ministry of Justice we have established a special unit to combat violence against women and children. In 2006, within the Ministry of the Interior, we established a unit to protect families and children. We attach exceptional priority to our 2008 national strategy on female circumcision. We have amended the penal code to include adequate protection for women during armed conflict.

Also, we have allocated 25 per cent of seats in the national legislative council and in state legislative councils to women. The number of women parliamentarians has reached 300. Moreover, the State has adopted policies and measures to support child health and to provide free health care to all children under five. In 2010 these efforts culminated in our ratification of the Federal Child Act. The State has given high priority to reproductive health and has established a national plan in that regard. It is now implementing a road map to reduce maternal mortality.

In the sphere of environmental sustainability, we have ratified all regional and international agreements, protocols and programmes on environmental protection and have adopted a strategy for the supply of drinking water and sanitation.

We reaffirm the great importance of official development assistance as a complementary development tool. The global crisis should not be used as an excuse to reduce the ODA pledged by developed countries. As a country emerging from internal conflict, the Sudan achieved a great deal with the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. But it has received very little of the support pledged to it at the first and second Oslo donors conferences, and it has been relying on its own national efforts to implement its development plans.

We reaffirm the importance of the United Nations in leading all efforts to attain the MDGs. We bear a collective responsibility to make the Organization effective, universal and inclusive as it effectively addresses the whole range of world problems and issues, including those related to development. We therefore look forward to deepening our multilateral international cooperation and to giving priority to collective interests rather than selfish narrow interests, for the sake of creating an international environment conducive to sustainable environmental cooperation.

In conclusion, allow me to add that the Sudan is coming to an extremely important and critical phase in its history — the referendum to be held in three and a half months. We need the support and welcome efforts of the United Nations in order to strengthen our choice of voluntary unity and to preserve the Sudan as a unified, safe and stable country that enjoys peace, amity, cooperation, brotherhood and solidarity.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Daniele Bodini, chair of the delegation of the Republic of San Marino.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): At the outset, let me commend the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General in pushing forward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the sincere interest of Presidents

Treki and Deiss in pursuing this agenda. I also would like to commend the Permanent Representatives of Senegal and Denmark for guiding the negotiations on the draft outcome document (A/65/L.1).

Ten years ago, our heads of State and Government from countries small and large, developing and developed, from the North and the South, agreed upon the Millennium Development Goals, to be achieved by 2015 — a bold but much needed undertaking. Today, two-thirds of the way along this journey, we are here to assess our own performances in fulfilling these fundamental humanitarian needs. The excellent report of the Secretary-General (A/64/665) underlines that in some areas we have succeeded, but that in others we are still lagging behind. Much more has to be accomplished in the next five years. I am certain that no one in this Hall or anywhere else believes that the MDGs should not be achieved.

During the past few years, unexpected economic and financial world upheavals, as well as major natural catastrophes, derailed the process started 10 years ago. Together, today in this same Hall, we are reasserting our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. Obviously, lasting success will depend on sustainable worldwide economic growth.

To reach our goals, we have to provide appropriate jobs to the hundreds of millions of unemployed or underemployed, especially the young. They will be the new, steady and enthusiastic engine to propel forward our world economy. I am convinced that the new generations will create a world of social and economic stability, not only in the developing countries, but also in the developed ones. This reinvigorated economy will propel the MDG effort as well.

We must correct our world financial system so that the rewards of our collective work can continue to grow and maintain a steady and safe value. The uncertainty created in the past few years by unregulated, speculative financial behaviour has hampered the economic and social stability of so many of our countries and unfortunately derailed progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We must also encourage a stronger public-private partnership in every sector of our global alliance to help employ all our world citizens.

In conclusion, San Marino, a proud Member of the United Nations and the General Assembly, is grateful for the renewed commitment of so many countries to continue on the right path towards reaching our Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Valero Briceño, chair of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ten years after the World Summit at which the Millennium Development Goals were approved, the results are disappointing. The fulfilment of the Goals is seriously threatened. Most developed countries have not fulfilled the commitment of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to official development assistance. The global economic and financial crisis of capitalism of recent years has created more poverty, more inequality and more injustice.

The financial economy exercises hegemony over the world and increases the accumulation of billions of dollars without creating any good. It is the economy of the casino. It has subjugated States and seeks to destroy the public sphere and to privatize everything, from public services to war.

Market totalitarianism prevents the exercise of human rights and the right to development. In this context, there is no right to work or health care; there is only labour market adjustments and private companies that provide health insurance. There is also no right to food, which depends on the international market that has turned food into objects of speculation through futures transactions.

The reduction in social spending has affected the ability of States to ensure the economic, social and cultural rights of their peoples. Even in developed countries, the most vulnerable sectors cannot escape the heinous effects of the capitalist crisis, caused by financial speculators with the complicity of the world's most powerful Governments and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The Bolivarian revolution, under the leadership of President Hugo Chávez Frías, promotes an alternative model of development that is humanist and effects deep structural changes in favour of the poor and the excluded. Although our country has not escaped the negative effects of the crisis of capitalism,

social investment has increased, and today Venezuelans increasingly enjoy improved living conditions. Social investment has become a national strategy to achieve sovereign and comprehensive development, and thus to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Sixty per cent of total tax revenue between 1999 and 2009 has been earmarked for social investment. As a result, we are moving towards a universal social security system.

Social missions, in favour of the most excluded sectors of society, have enabled Venezuela to achieve social inclusion quickly and on a large scale. The poverty rate fell from 49 per cent in 1998 to 24 per cent at the end of 2009. And during the same period extreme poverty fell dramatically, from 29.8 per cent to 7.2 per cent.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has recognized that Venezuela is the country that has reduced inequality the most in the region. The unemployment rate in Venezuela fell from 15 per cent in 1998, before the start of the revolutionary Government headed by President Chávez Frías, to 6.6 per cent in 2009.

The promotion of gender equality and greater involvement of women in economic and social matters in Venezuela has already been achieved. State policies foster the training and equal participation of women in public life. Here is an important fact: four of the five branches of public power in Venezuela are chaired by women — the legislative, electoral, judicial and moral.

By 2001 Venezuela had already reached the target on access to safe drinking water. And in 2005 Venezuela met the target in waste water collection.

In our country, we are advancing in the universalization of rights related to identity, food, health, education and employment. In 2005, UNESCO declared Venezuela to be an illiteracy-free country, thanks to plans carried out in cooperation with our brothers in Cuba. And recently, the same United Nations agency declared that Venezuela was among the five countries in the world with greatest access to university education. Furthermore, before 2015 Venezuela will achieve, among other milestones, the universalization of primary education, a reduction in the child mortality rate, a reduction in the maternal mortality rate and a reduction in the spread of HIV/AIDS, and it will roll back the incidence of malaria and dengue fever.

In Venezuela, we are moving towards a high-quality democracy focused solely on the interests, needs and hopes of our people: a participatory and active democracy where political freedoms are truly exercised and where the benefits of development are enjoyed.

The Bolivarian Government promotes Latin American and Caribbean integration, based on the principles of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America — Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) and Petrocaribe are contributing to the eradication of poverty and to overcoming inequality and unemployment in our region. Hence, Venezuela supports brother of the continent in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Venezuela has regained full control of its natural resources. In Venezuela, all basic services are considered to be human rights. Our country's resources, managed in a sovereign manner, have allowed for the creation of the Bank of the South and the Bank of ALBA. State policies have become tools to promote independent and autonomous development, without the tyranny of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In place of neo-liberal globalization, we propose the globalization of justice and equity. In place of the looting and subjection of countries, we propose fair trade and a world in which we all win, through solidarity and partnership.

Under the leadership of President Hugo Chávez Frías, Venezuela has met most of the Millennium Development Goals. Within the framework of the full exercise of sovereignty and self-determination, we have opted for the Venezuelan route to socialism in order to create a society where justice, equality and solidarity reign, with full enjoyment of human rights and democratic freedoms.

Our Bolivarian revolution is geared towards the full realization of social, economic and cultural guarantees, fully consistent with the words of our liberator, Simón Bolívar, who, at the Congress of Angostura in 1819, stated that "the most perfect system of Government is that which results in the greatest possible measure of happiness, the greatest social security and the greatest political stability".

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.